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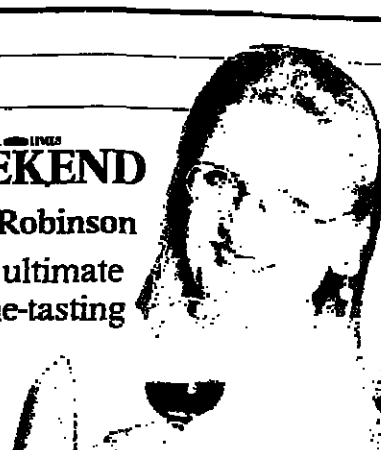
FOOTBALL SATURDAY

The Steve McManaman Column
My wonder goal
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WEEKEND

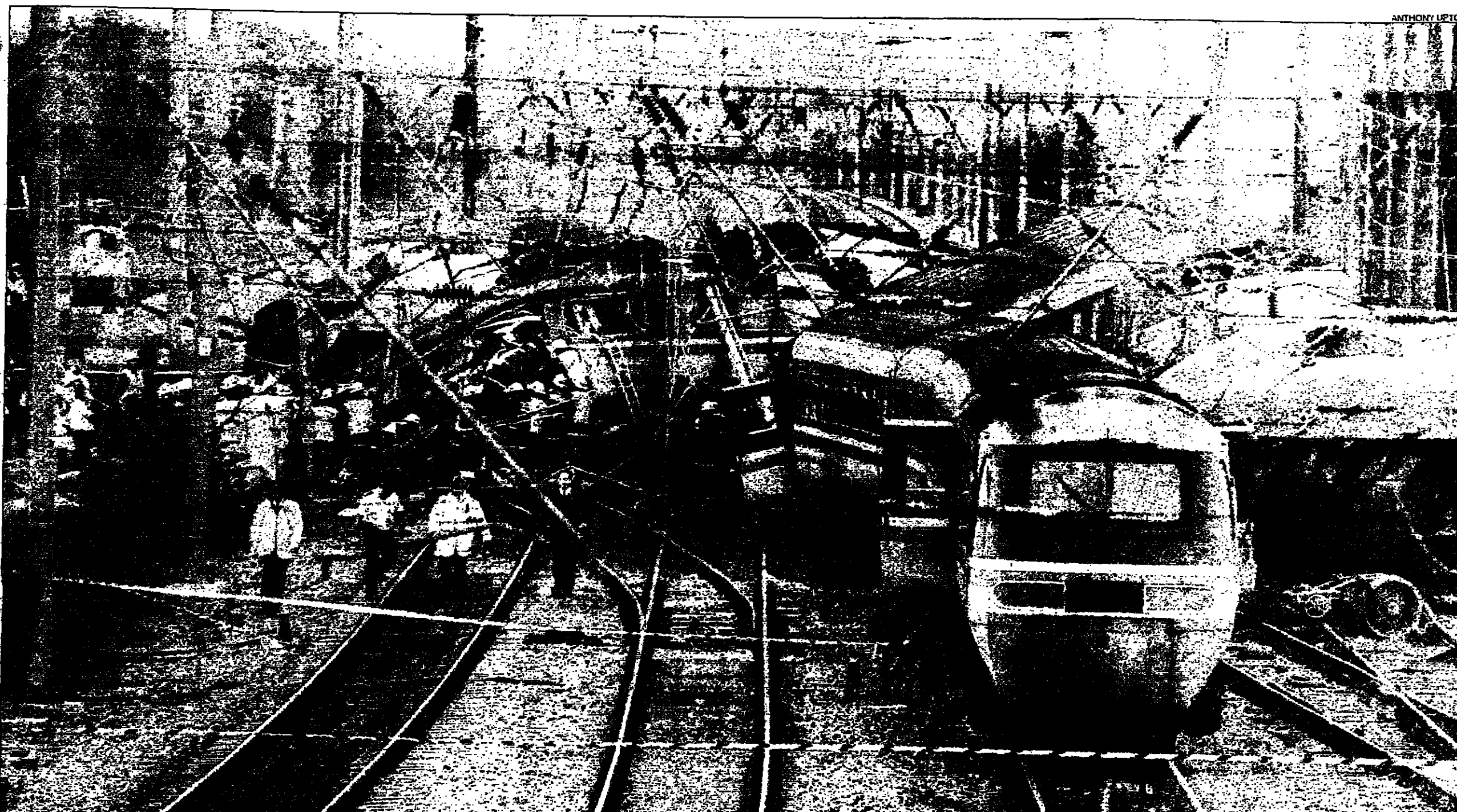
Jancis Robinson
My ultimate wine-tasting



MONDAY

THE TIMES FOR ONLY
10P
EVERY MONDAY

Six killed as trains collide



Rescuers and an air ambulance helicopter alongside the wreckage of the Swansea to Paddington InterCity train yesterday. The Great Western 125 packed with passengers had just gone through Southall station in west London travelling at an estimated 90 mph

Drivers may hold key to crash

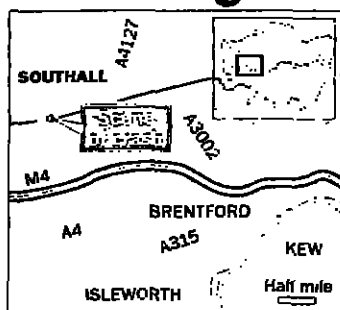
By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND DANIEL MCGORRY

CRASH investigators were last night examining the twin theories that driver error or faulty signalling caused the high-speed rail crash which killed six and injured 170, 13 of whom were seriously ill in hospital last night.

The collision between an InterCity Swansea-London service and a freight train raised renewed concerns that little progress had been made to rail safety in the wake of the Clapham disaster nine years ago in which 35 died.

Both drivers survived and will be interviewed today if well enough to explain how the empty EWS freight train was crossing the path of the crowded Great Western 125. The express had just gone through Southall station, west London, at 1.20pm travelling at an estimated 90 mph towards Paddington. Several carriages left the track and crumpled on to their side leaving passengers disoriented as acrid smoke from the burning locomotive filled the carriages.

Fire crews spent two hours cutting out some of the dead and injured. Survivors and walking wounded were



in tears as they scrambled passed the bodies of some of the victims, who had been hurled from the express as it broke up on impact.

John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, arrived at the site while firemen were still removing the last of the victims. He said it was too early to identify the cause of the crash but said there would be a public inquiry by the Health and Safety Executive.

There will be a further separate investigation by Railtrack, who own the signalling and track, and another by British Transport Police who will decide whether there are grounds for manslaughter charges.

"I want first of all to express my

condolences to the friends and relatives of those who have died or been injured in this terrible tragedy," Mr Prescott said. The Queen and Tony Blair were among those who sent their condolences last night.

Andy Hancock, acting director of Railtrack Great Western, said the InterCity engine and the two front first class carriages took the full impact of the collision on a stretch of track where the maximum speed was 120mph.

"It is far too early to speculate as to the cause of the incident. That is a matter for the investigation," he said.

He confirmed that Great Western trains were conducting a pilot study with Automatic Train Protection systems, but was unable to say whether such a system was "operable" on the InterCity train involved.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the RMT rail union, indicated that the sell-off of British Rail two years ago could have contributed to the accident.

"One of the factors an inquiry should consider is whether the fragmentation of the railway industry was a contributory factor in the cause of the accident," Mr Knapp said.

Last night three of the survivors were undergoing surgery and were

said to be "very seriously ill". One of the survivors told how he was lucky to be alive. Dr Michael Heilner, 55, from Aldbourne, Wiltshire, suffered cuts to his head and scalp and there were fears that he might lose the sight of his right eye after he was thrown from his seat in a front carriage when the train crashed.

The consultant physician, who works for the NHS and is based at Princess Margaret Hospital in Swindon, is one of three people being treated at Ealing Hospital.

The father of two, who also suffered one or two fractured ribs in the crash, was on his way to a council meeting for the British Society for Gastroenterology in London when the accident happened.

"I was in a front coach when there was a tremendous bang and everything went black," he said. "Something hit me very hard on the head which made me lose the vision in my right eye. I was thrown across the compartment as the coach rolled over, and my first thought was that I was dreaming; then I realised it was not a dream."

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MPs warn Blair on Welsh bill

Tony Blair promised to press ahead with legislation for setting up a Welsh assembly despite the narrow devolution vote. But some Labour MPs and peers said that they would oppose a BillPage 14

Unionists meet Sinn Fein

At Stormont on Tuesday David Trimble will become the first Unionist leader to confront his Sinn Fein counterpart face-to-face. Page 4

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Hague man walks out

THE bitter civil war between William Hague's advisers culminated last night in the resignation of Francis Halewood as the Conservatives' Director of Communications.
Mr Halewood's departure followed days of tension between Hague factions after allegations by the Tory leader that Tony Blair had sought to capitalise on the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.
In a letter to The Times, today Alan Clark, MP for Kensington, accuses Mr Hague of trying to get a mandate for his reforms on the back of his endorsement as party leader. Pages 4, 25



Prince Charles: game to join in the action

Prince Charles returns to duty with 'thank you'

THE Prince of Wales, in his first public appearance since the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, yesterday thanked the public on behalf of himself and his sons for the response to her death.
He joined in a game of basketball during a visit to a Salvation Army centre in Manchester.
In Paris, investigators said that the sole survivor of the crash in which the Princess died remembers nothing about the circumstances of the accident. The initial questioning of Trevor Rees-Jones, the Princess's 34-year-old body-

guard, confirmed fears that the key witness to the tragedy is suffering from partial amnesia. Mr Rees-Jones cannot recall anything after the Mercedes, driven by chauffeur Henri Paul, left the Paris Ritz on the night of the crash, police sources said. The chauffeur was later found to be well over the legal alcohol limit for driving.
Mr Rees-Jones mainly communicates by writing, said officials at Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital.

First outing, page 5
Fallen hero, page 16

Zinfandel?

Wasn't he an Astronaut?

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CALIFORNIA

Search centres on fail-safe computer

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
AND KEVIN EASON

RAIL investigators began a painstaking search of the wreckage last night to discover whether a sophisticated computerised safety system designed to counter driver error was working.

The £700 million Automatic Train Protection system, one of the main recommendations of the inquiry into the Clapham train crash in which 35 people died, was rejected by the then Transport Secretary Dr Brian Mawhinney in 1995.

However, the system, which will prevent a driver overriding a red signal, has undergone trials over the past four years on the section of railway on which yesterday's accident happened. Although many of

INVESTIGATION

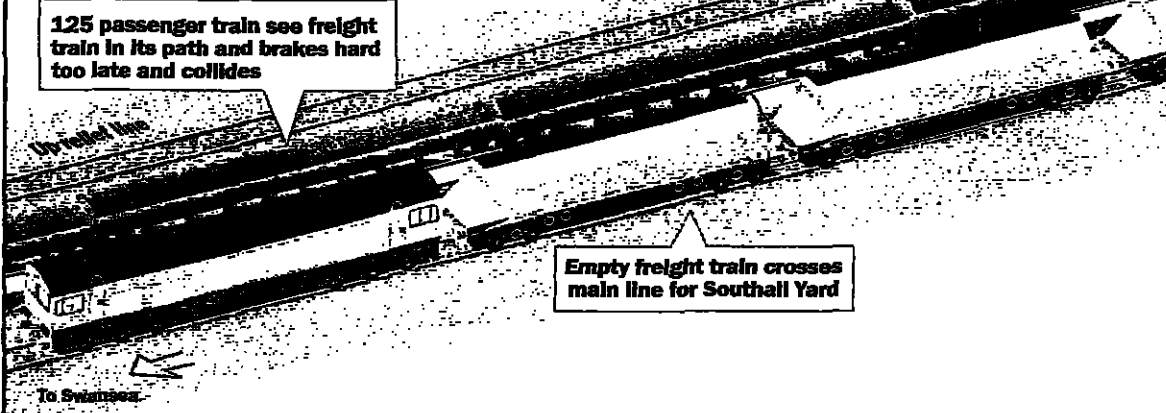
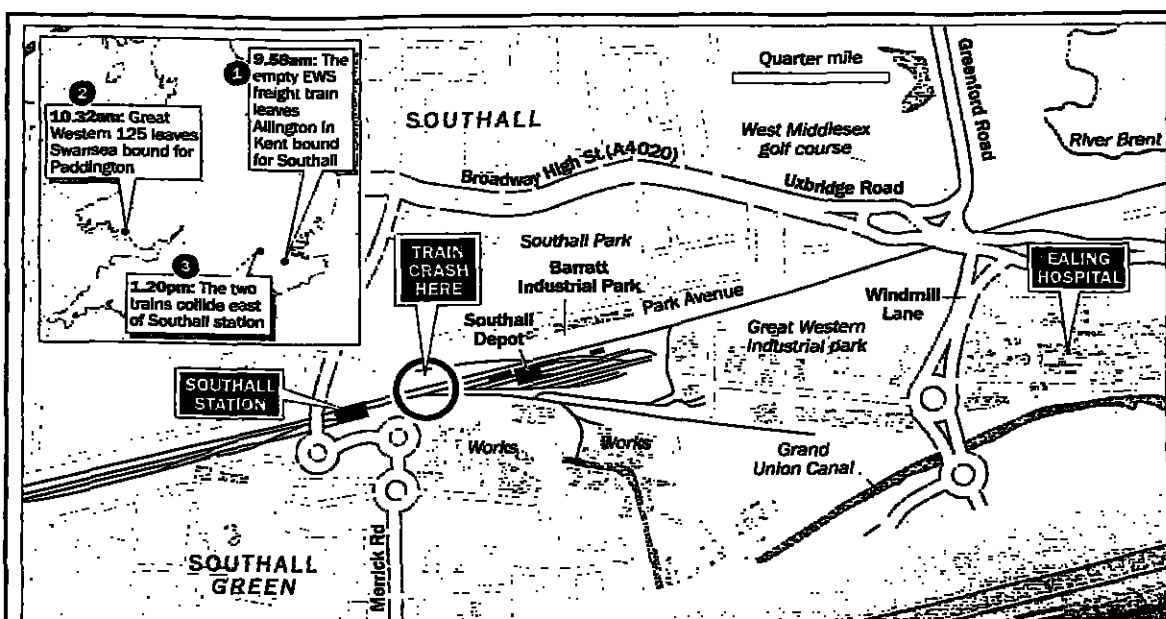
Great Western high-speed trains are fitted with the system, the company was unable to say last night whether it was in operation on the 10.32 Swansea-Paddington train. This will be one of the central points of the investigation by Railtrack and the Health and Safety Executive. Inspectors already know that the passenger train was able to travel at its maximum speed on the stretch of track. Although it had slowed down shortly before, experts believed it would have been travelling at 90mph, but could have been going as fast as 125mph. Such a speed would make it impossible to stop in less than 600 yards. The stretch of track in Southall in west London in which high-speed passenger trains negotiate routes criss-crossed by slow-moving goods trains.

The testimony of the two train drivers, who survived the crash, will provide crucial evidence to the two inquiries that are expected to take at least two months to complete.

The failure to introduce the automatic train protection system, widely used on the Continent, is one of the most controversial consequences of the Clapham rail accident. Rail unions have called repeatedly for trains to be given the additional protection, which has been installed on Eurostar trains using the Channel Tunnel. The system is also to be introduced on the West Coast main line service as it undergoes a £750 million improvement programme.

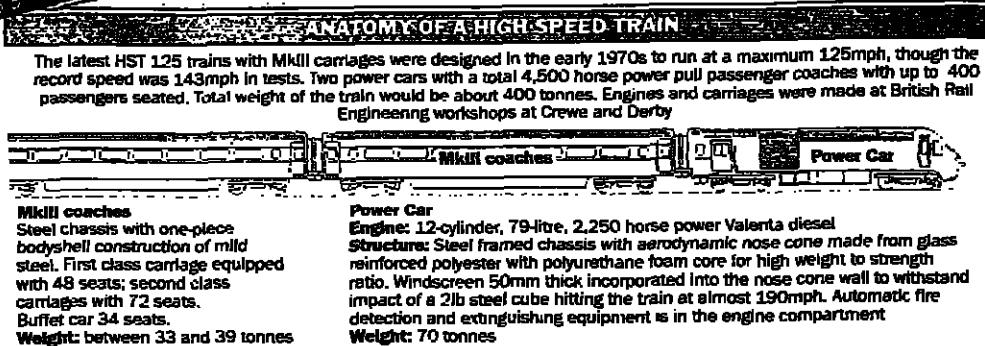
Cecil (now Lord) Parkinson, Transport Secretary at the time of the Clapham crash, had said "finance would not stand in the way" of any safety measures recommended in the wake of the accident. However, the trial of the system has been limited to the London-Bristol line and the Chiltern line, operating out of Marylebone station.

The system operates on both the track and train. Although the track is understood still to have the system in operation, there have been extensive problems in its operation and consultants from Belgium have been called to investigate



TIMETABLE TO DISASTER

9.58am: The empty freight train with just a driver on board leaves Allington in Kent bound for Southall.
10.32am: A packed Great Western express train leaves Swansea bound for Paddington station in London, due to arrive 1.25pm.
Noon: Express is at Bristol Parkway and heading for Swindon.
12.54pm: Last stop for the express is Reading.
1.20pm: The crash when the express hits the freight train east of Southall station in west London.
4.15pm: Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott arrives at scene.
4.47pm: Prime Minister Tony Blair extends his personal sympathies to the families of the casualties.



This London Ambulance Service picture shows firefighters attempting to free a trapped passenger yesterday

Disaster plan goes into action at four London hospitals

By NIGEL HAWKES

THE injured were treated at four hospitals within three miles of the scene, as emergency procedures swung into operation.

Ealing Hospital took 11 casualties, six with major injuries and five less serious. The Central Middlesex Hospital in Park Royal, Hillingdon Hospital and the Isleworth-based West Middlesex Hospital all took less seriously-injured patients.

Two people with serious injuries were taken by air ambulance to the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, while one with serious head injuries was taken to Charing Cross Hospital in Hamamersmith.

The major incident plan prepared for just such an emergency was triggered when Railtrack alerted the London Ambulance Service. Local hospitals and specialist neurological and burns units were told to be ready, as police cleared roads for the ambulances to ferry the injured to hospitals.

London Ambulance Service control officer Mark Purcell said: "Ealing Hospital was put on red alert and warned to expect the majority of the most serious injuries. It went very, very well and the police did an excellent job in keeping the roads clear for the ambulances which helped speed up the operation."

If an accident has to happen, Friday lunchtime is in many ways the best time as no admissions, except emergencies, are made until Monday. But the staff are still on duty.

At Ealing Hospital, up to 30 seriously-injured people were expected and dozens of doctors were on standby. In the event, only 11 were treated, none with life-threatening injuries. At least three were to be kept in overnight.

Dr Michael Rudolf, medical director of Ealing Hospital, said extra doctors were drafted in, as well as more blood supplies. The hospital's six operating theatres were on standby, with three ready for use at any time.

At nearby Hillingdon Hospital, the first casualties arrived just after 3pm. It treated ten patients, the most seriously-injured with broken legs, broken ribs and a chest injury. The other casualties had minor injuries, including broken and fractured bones, cuts and bruises.

Accident and emergency consultant Dr Chuck Merrill said: "We had a very good response from staff. We were

quite well prepared and it went very, very well from our point of view."

Central Middlesex dealt with six casualties, four with minor injuries who were soon released, and two others who were admitted overnight — a woman with a broken collarbone, and a man with chest injuries.

A hospital spokesman said: "Everybody was ready. Everybody was extremely calm and all our facilities were ready. We could have dealt with a much worse scenario if it had been necessary."

All NHS hospitals are expected to prepare plans for dealing with disasters in their area. These include detailed procedures for alerting doctors, clearing beds, preparing operating theatres, providing support to the

emergency services on the scene if required, and providing supplies such as blood.

Such plans are regularly rehearsed to ensure that when a disaster actually happens, all goes as it should.

First reactions suggest that plans went well, but that would not invariably be the case, according to a recent study carried out by Dr Simon Carley, of the Accident and Emergency Department at Manchester Royal Infirmary. Under NHS guidelines issued in 1990, large regional hospitals should have mobile medical teams ready to offer instant back-up to the emergency services, with specific roles and training for the medical "flying squads" set out.

But Dr Carley's research showed that of 150 large hospitals, only a third of the teams contained both a surgeon and an anaesthetist. In almost half of the teams, the leader was a junior doctor, and members of teams were invariably junior doctors with little experience.

A major problem in previous disasters has been the failure of co-ordination between different bodies at the scene of disasters. In 1992 the King's Fund, an independent centre for health policy analysis, criticised the response to five major disasters — the King's Cross fire, the Clapham, Purley and Cannon Street rail crashes, and the Marchioness riverboat sinking.

One major criticism made in the report was that hospital teams are used too frequently at the scene of the accident, when they are better employed back at their hospitals. On this occasion, this advice seems to have been followed.

Opponents of sell-off feared for safety

By RICHARD FORD

EVER since the Conservative Government pledged to sell of the rail system, opponents have argued that privatisation would compromise safety for passengers.

The issue of putting profits before safety became the key battleground between the Tories and their opponents in the unions and Labour Party in the run-up to privatisation.

PRIVATISATION

Several BR managers said that safety would be compromised when responsibility for safety was split between private train companies. Railtrack, the track owner, and dozens of service companies contracted to maintain 23,000 miles of rail and signalling.

The key fear was that contracting out would involve firms unused to railway workings and that safe working practices might be cast aside. Others, however, dismissed the unions' arguments as no more than the cry of a vested interest under attack.

Vernon Hince, assistant general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT), said that the "fragmentation of the industry will lead to a critical breakdown in the safety chain of command".

During the privatisation debate a series of leaked documents appeared to highlight the erosion of the safety culture on Britain's railways through the Health and Safety Executive and Transport Department insisted that there was no evidence of an overall deterioration in Railtrack's safety standards.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of RMT, indicated yesterday that the sell-off of British Rail two years ago could have contributed to the Southall accident. But Conservatives rejected such suggestions as "plain silly", and they were also played down by the Transport Department.

Mr Knapp said: "One of the factors an inquiry should consider is whether the fragmentation of the railway industry was a contributory factor in the cause of the accident." The inquiry should pay particular attention to the role that the

SHARE FALL

As news of the crash filtered through to the stock market yesterday, shares in Railtrack, which owns the railway infrastructure, saw early gains wiped out. Earlier, the price touched 855p, its highest since joining the stock market in May last year. It quickly went into reverse, touching 829p before rallying to reduce the fall on the day to 11½p at 839p, as almost five million shares changed hands.

Richard Hope, consultant to the Railway Gazette, said: "Much more attention has been given to safety processes since 1988. We are seeing, as a result, that rail safety is better than it has ever been."

He said that the latest published figures did not support Labour Party and trade union fears that safety was being compromised. The figures from the HSE show that the number of significant train accidents fell from 237 in 1977 to 200 in 1987 to 105 in 1996-97.

THE WORST CRASH SINCE CLAPHAM JUNCTION

THE crash yesterday is the most serious in Britain since the Clapham Junction disaster in December 1988 in which 35 people were killed and 113 injured when two commuter trains collided when a driver correctly stopped to report a faulty signal. A third train crashed into the wreckage moments later, killing more passengers. The signal was found to have been wrongly rewired.

Britain's worst rail crash happened in 1915 when a troop-carrying train ploughed into a passenger train at Quintinshill, near Gretna in Scotland. Three more trains crashed into the wreckage and 227 people died, including 200 officers and men of the 7th Royal Scots. The

worst disaster since the Second World War occurred at Harrow and Wealdstone, north London, in 1952, when 112 people were killed and 340 injured in a three-train collision. Britain's most famous railway disaster claimed 78 lives in 1879, when the Tay Bridge in Scotland collapsed under the weight of the Edinburgh to Dundee express.

The world's worst railway disaster is thought to have happened in India in June 1981, when an overcrowded carriage plunged into the River Bagmati when the driver braked suddenly to avoid running down a cow, sacred to the Hindus. Rescuers eventually found 268 bodies, but investigators estimated the total number dead at more than 800.

As many as 800 people were killed in Chelyabinsk, in June 1989 when two trans-Siberian express trains packed with holidaymakers on their way to the Black Sea coast were blown up when liquid gas escaped from a pipeline and ignited. Yesterday's crash happened two miles from a 1973 accident in which 10 people were killed and 94 injured. A London to Oxford express was derailed at Ealing when an open battery box door hit a signal control box. In 1991, four were killed and 22 injured in a head-on collision on a single-track line outside Newton station. Glasgow, and a passenger was killed and 248 injured at Cannon Street station in London when a commuter train ran into buffers.

DIANA

Write Your Own Tribute

You are invited to write your own tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales... a piece of prose or verse imaginatively celebrating her life (possibly an aspect of her charitable work) or marking her passing (such as your thoughts on seeing her). The invitation is made by the David Thomas Charitable Trust whose primary purpose is to encourage creative writing as a means of expression, and is offering £200 in cash to the outright winner, plus £100 runner-up for both prose and verse, to you or if you prefer her memorial fund.

DIANA - MY TRIBUTE

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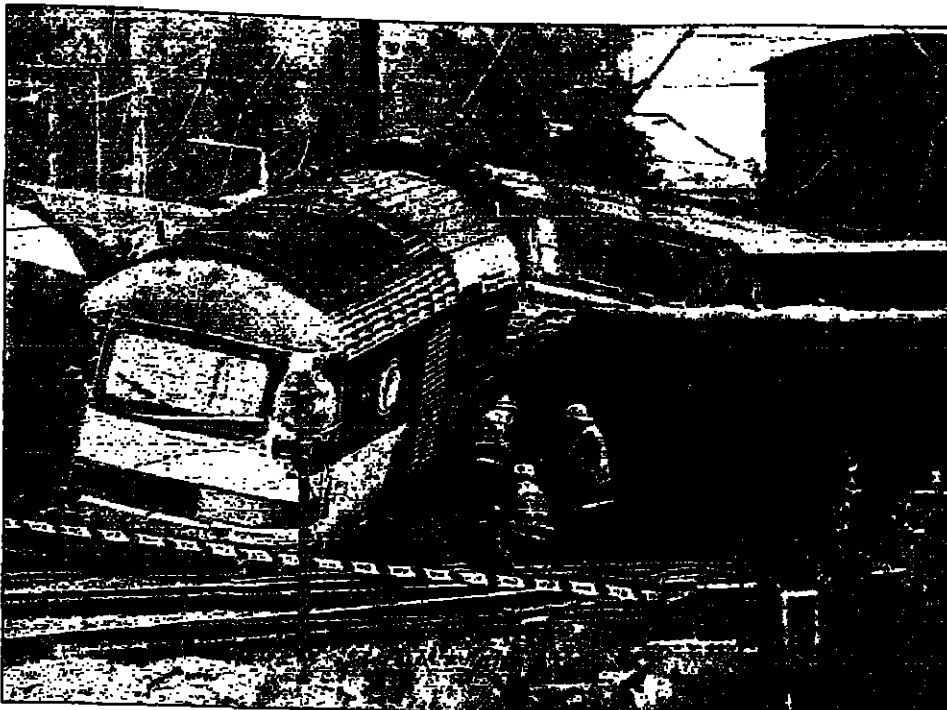
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ADV 1352



Searching the wreckage after the crash: local residents helped to free passengers

Trapped in the dark, people were crying: Please help us

The 10.32 Great Western express eased out of Swansea precisely on time for the three-hour journey to London. At the start of the journey, only about 30 passengers had joined the train. By the time it reached its first stop at Cardiff 20 minutes later, there was a crush of passengers waiting on the platform.

Many were journalists who had worked late into Thursday night covering the devolution vote. The train became so crowded that not everyone could get a seat. Mark Cole, a BBC reporter, said: "Some were standing in the aisles. Others were perched on the edge of seats, or sitting at the end of the carriages."

Some moved forward to empty seats in the first-class carriages. Stewards, pushing refreshment trolleys found their path blocked by the throng of passengers. As the express accelerated to around 125mph, many of those on board, Mr Cole included, were dozing.

The train reached Reading on time and had pulled out for the final stretch towards Paddington, when it braked violently. It was 1.20pm. Celia Ellacott, a Channel 4 journalist, said: "When the train slowed down and started juddering, the thought flashed through my mind that we might crash and then suddenly it just happened. It was terrifying."

One businessman said: "It jumped the tracks and cantile-

vered on to its side. The windows started to shatter. Debris from the other train started to hit us. Dark black smoke filled the carriage, making people very scared."

Mr Cole woke up as the train "seemed to pick up speed and within seconds had left the track — glass was flying through the windows. The carriage I was in veered off. It caught fire. There was smoke everywhere. People started to panic." Nick Sutton, a BBC researcher, was in a lavatory cubicle and was thrown back against the wall. As acrid smoke engulfed the carriages,

THE SURVIVORS

guard's voice coming over the intercom. Outside power cables were crackling as they fell beside the windows, flashing above the carriages. The guard warned of the danger of the cables: "Don't run. Don't jump out." He asked passengers to move toward the back of the train.

In the darkness, people were crying. Some had cuts from flying glass. Passengers stood in the dark, queuing to be released: the doors were locked. Luggage had been thrown across the compartments, hitting travellers and making escape more difficult. Many helped those cut by flying glass to stanch the flow of blood.

Mr Cole said that eventually the only way out was by

pushing out the remaining glass from a window, climbing up and jumping the 10ft to the ground as the carriage rested on its side. "People were in a bad state, and the doors would not open. We had to climb out of the windows and jump down. It was pretty bad, a lot of people had been cut by flying glass."

Chris Dixey, 50, an engineer from near Canterbury, in Kent, was in the third crashed carriage, which was on its side. About 30 people were with him, many of them elderly. "There were a lot of people shouting, then one man said to people to stay in their seats because it was on its side," Mr Dixey tried to break a window, but it would not smash.

"There was a flash of fire, then it went out, but I was worried about fire," he said. "Eventually we got a door open. There were some plain clothes policemen at the side of the track who arrived very quickly. They helped the old people out. They were very good."

Ms Ellacott said: "When we got out we were told to mind the overhead cables. We climbed out and looked forward and saw that the engine was in flames."

As the first survivors hauled themselves through the broken windows and slithered down the outside of the carriages, they were confronted by the sight of the bodies that had been flung from the



Rescue workers carrying one of the injured away from the scene. Hospitals were alerted and moved into a well-rehearsed disaster drill

ruptured carriage. Mr Sutton said: "As I walked off the train, I saw a body lying by the side of the tracks. No one was touching it. His shirt was ripped and there was blood all over him."

Mr Cole said bodies were lying broken by the track: "I saw two or three fatalities. They were on the track in front of me by the first-class carriage. The engine was on its side and on fire. There was great concern that the train itself was not safe at that time."

Local residents were running to help. Manjit Singh, who lives in Park Avenue, backing on to the railway line, ran to the trackside with a friend, Tony Mair. They saw the driver of the express, sitting stunned and shocked on the track beside the shattered diesel cab.

"I grabbed him and asked him if he was all right. He said 'What has happened?' He was all black from the smoke. From the second carriage were cries of 'help, help, help'. There were a lot of injured people, everyone was just saying, 'Help us, help us'. We were trying to get people out from the rear carriages and they had to go past these bodies. People got hysterical. We got curtains and things that were lying around and covered up their heads and faces."

Rajinder Vagarwall, a coach company owner, described how with four neighbours

they tore down a fence to get to the injured: "We pushed down the wire-mesh fence to get to the track. We went to the first carriage and people were shouting and screaming, but they were too badly stuck to get out so we had to go to the second."

"There we helped out three Chinese people — two men and a woman. There was also an old lady of 80 and her sister, who were too shaken to come out at first. We managed to guide them out and later took them to our house."

As fire crews and paramedics descended on the crash site

the local major disaster plan went into action. A mile from Southall station at Ealing hospital, the casualty department was cleared, wards were emptied, operating theatres were put on standby and all operations were cancelled as Dr Michael Rudolf, the medical director, and his staff waited for the injured.

"We had been warned by police that it was carnage out there, similar to that of an air crash," he said. At the Middlesex Hospital, a spokesman said they had been told to expect large numbers of the less seriously injured passen-

gers: "It's something we practise for."

The walking wounded were led through a park, many carrying what luggage they could salvage. Some were wrapped in orange blankets and were taken to a school. Harjeet Singh Jagdev, 37, a housewife in Park Avenue, said: "People were letting the injured into their houses and getting out the first aid kits. Some ladies were screaming and crying."

Her son, Rajdeep, 12, a pupil at Villiers High School, where many of the injured were taken, said: "I had just got

back to school after lunch and there was an announcement from our teachers telling us to go home because there had been an accident. Some of the pupils stayed to help the injured people."

Pupils helped give tea and biscuits to the walking wounded. The school, which is just 500 yards from the scene of the crash, is a recognised emergency centre. Dai Jones, a senior member of staff, said he was enormously pleased with the way his pupils coped sensitively with the injured: "They were absolutely marvelous. I am very proud."

Rail chiefs helped the injured

THE managing director of Great Western Trains, Richard George, and the commercial manager of Railtrack, Richard Middleton, were among passengers in one of the first class coaches which bore some of the worst of the impact.

Mr George, 41, escaped without injury and immediately set about helping his injured fellow passengers. A GWT spokeswoman said: "Mr George helped other passengers as soon as he could. It is the sort of thing he would do."

Passengers told how Mr George called out for everyone trapped in the compartment to remain calm. He warned them not to try to push their way out while power cables were still coming down around the carriages.

Cambridge University-educated Mr George, who lives in Bath and has two children, was promoted to managing director from the post of franchise development director just six months ago. Earlier in his career he was responsible for InterCity fleet and services.

The men, who were returning from a business trip, were badly shaken and shocked but not seriously



Richard George

hurt in the crash. A Railtrack spokeswoman said: "I know that Mr Middleton has remained at the crash scene to assist with the investigation."

Railtrack chairman Sir Robert Horton said his thoughts went out to those involved and anxious friends and relatives waiting for news. He said: "We have already begun a full and thorough investigation and Railtrack's Chief Executive, John Edmonds, is at the site with senior industry executives."

"Anything at this point which suggests a cause of the accident is speculation."

Reporter on board broke news on air

USING a mobile phone on board the train, Jane Garvey, the presenter of Radio 5 Live's breakfast programme, gave a first person account of the crash and its aftermath live on radio.

Ms Garvey checked to see if she could help anyone, then rang work to get the story on air. She was travelling in the first-class carriages which took the brunt of the crash, but not as far forward as those people who lost their lives.

Only minutes after the crash she told Radio 5 Live listeners: "There is billowing smoke, very acrid. It stinks. I can see bits of twisted metal, which must be carriages, and people's possessions and chairs all over the track. It is total and utter chaos."

Miss Garvey, 32, who was travelling to her home in Islington, North London, after presenting a programme in Wales, said the train had been travelling quickly after leaving Reading station about 15 minutes before the crash. "I think at the very least, we are absolutely petrified but unhurt. We are in the first-class carriage, which we shouldn't even have

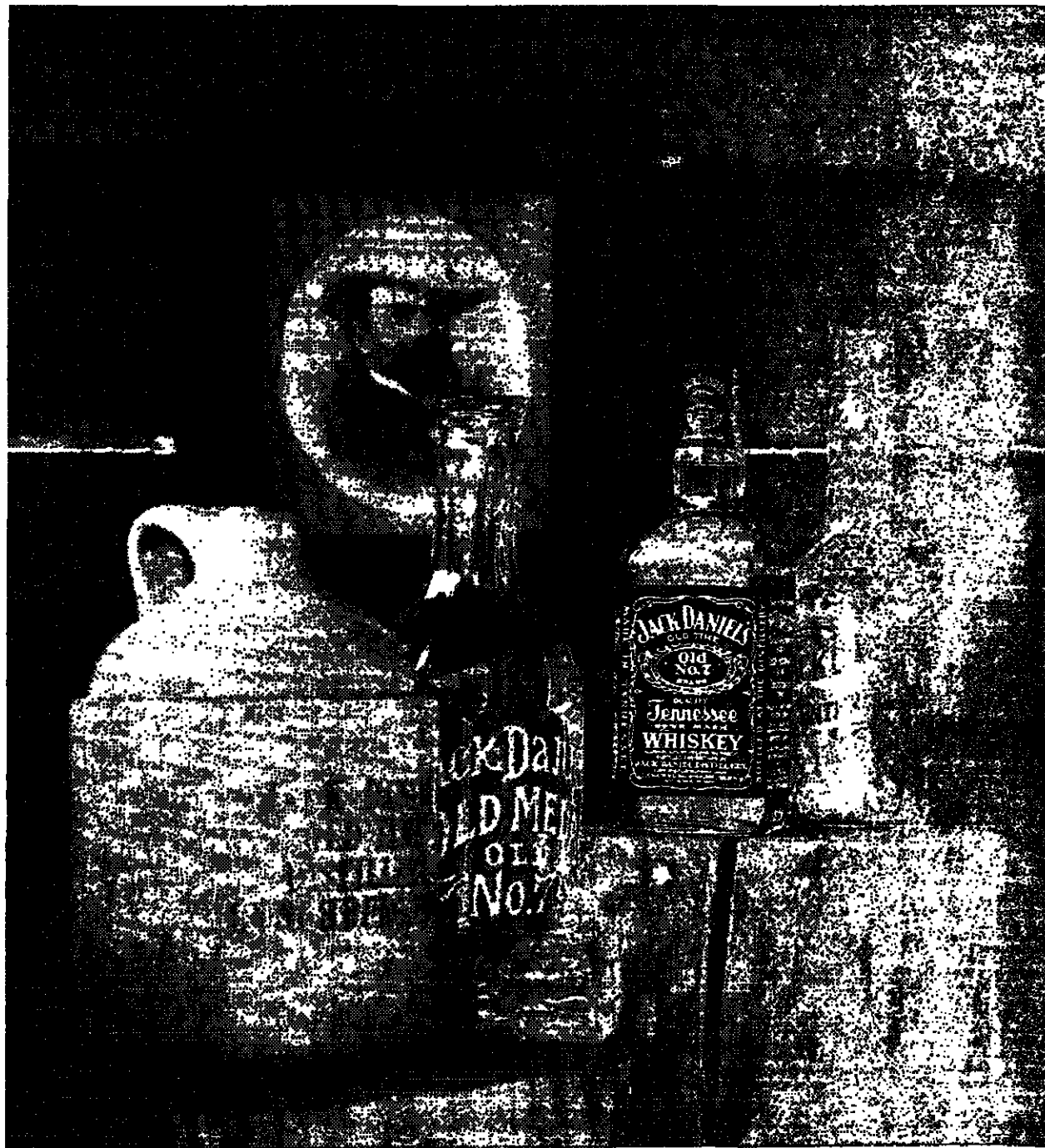


Jane Garvey

been in, but it has probably saved our lives."

Later, after leaving the train, she said: "The smell of smoke flooded the whole area, carriages started to fill up with smoke. Police appeared quite quickly, within moments. They were clearly worried about the power lines."

She said she overheard somebody she took to be the driver talking to police. "He was very, very shaken. He was telling the police he was going at 125mph and certainly, when I got off, three front carriages were very badly damaged and a fourth was sliced in two."



We hope you'll join us in celebrating Mr. Jack's birthday. Look for details at your favorite pub or restaurant.

THIS SEPTEMBER marks Mr. Jack Daniel's 151st birthday. Or maybe, as some say, his 147th.

The exact date of our founder's birth remains a mystery to this day (folks weren't too good at keeping records in those days). Some in Lynchburg say he was born in 1850, others claim it was 1846. While no one is exactly sure just when Mr. Jack was born, those who enjoy a smooth sippin' Tennessee Whiskey, we believe, are mighty glad he was.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKY

Reporting team: Kevin Eason, Stephen Farrell, Richard Ford, Mark Henderson, Michael Horsnell, Lin Jenkins, Tim Jones, Katherine Knight, Arthur Leathley, Daniel McGrory, Helen Rumbelow, Stewart Tendler, Emma Wilkins, Nicholas Wood

THE TIMES
on Monday

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Whitbread

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the world race16-page
supplement

LONDON TRIATHLON RESULTS ON P.11

PORTFOLIO
PLAY THE STOCK MARKET
AND WIN £2,000 EVERY DAYTrimble to
face Adams
at Belfast
peace talks

BY MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

DAVID TRIMBLE will become the first Unionist leader in Northern Ireland's 76-year history to confront a Sinn Féin leader face to face in talks.

Mr Trimble's encounter with Gerry Adams on Tuesday will take place at Stormont when the Ulster Unionist Party leader argues for Sinn Féin's expulsion from the peace negotiations. Ulster Unionist sources said that Mr Trimble did not plan to shake Mr Adams's hand, speak to him directly nor begin any form of negotiation.

He would make his case to George Mitchell, the talks chairman, and then probably leave before Mr Adams responded. But other political sources said the meeting's confrontational nature would give Mr Trimble the political cover he needs to break Unionism's oldest taboo and take the crucial last step towards rejoining the multi-party negotiations.

Mr Adams said if that was "the ticket for him to get into these talks then fair enough... We will put up with that rather than squander an unprecedented opportunity for

peace." Mr Trimble will cite this week's Markhill bomb and the IRA's disavowal of the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence as grounds to eject Sinn Féin but the British and Irish Governments are hardly going to back expulsion having spent months coaxing it to the table.

Ray Burke, the Irish Foreign Minister, said yesterday that the Dublin Government, after consulting security forces on both sides of the border, had found no evidence to show the IRA was involved in the Markhill attack. The blast was seen as an attempt to sabotage the talks process.

Next Tuesday's encounter will be the latest in a series of breakthroughs that have included the first live debate on British television between Unionist and Sinn Féin MPs — Ken Maginnis and Martin McGuinness — the first meeting between Ulster Unionist Party leaders and the Roman Catholic Church, and Sinn Féin's invitation to full-scale peace talks.

Mr Trimble recently called the idea of meeting Mr Adams "repulsive" and observers will



David Trimble, left, will meet Gerry Adams but is not expected to shake his hand or speak to him directly

be fascinated to see whether that abstract loathing survives if Mr Trimble and Mr Adams regularly find themselves in the same room.

Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, met Mr Adams yesterday in Dublin's government buildings to review progress in the peace talks. They also discussed the release and transfer of republican prisoners in British and

Irish jails. Both sides described their discussions as "constructive and positive".

Mr Ahern recently met the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party and the moderate Alliance Party yesterday afternoon. Dublin sources say that behind-the-scenes contacts are under way to try to arrange a meeting with Unionists "in the near future". The BBC yesterday



unveiled the first programme in a four-part documentary about the Provisional IRA in which Sean MacStiofain, its former chief of staff, is said unequivocally to confirm that Mr Adams was a top IRA official.

When Peter Taylor, presenter of *Provos: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, asks if Mr Adams and five other republicans secretly summoned to meet

William Whitelaw, then Northern Ireland Secretary, in London in 1972 were all IRA members, Mr MacStiofain answers "Yes. Not Sinn Féin, but IRA."

The Irish National Liberation Army, a republican splinter group, claimed that it had thrown a hand grenade at a Londonderry police station on Thursday night. It failed to detonate.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Blunkett
seeks pay
restraint
in schools

David Blunkett advised the teachers' pay review body that schools' recruitment difficulties did not warrant a salary increase above inflation. The Education Secretary's submission came as the three main classroom unions claimed a substantial increase. He told the review body that teachers' earnings had outstripped those of comparable groups in recent years and there was no case for a "catching-up" rise. He recommended a "moderate overall increase in line with other public-sector staff".

Son charged

A youth of 17, alleged to have attacked his mother, has been charged under new anti-stalking legislation with aggressive and abusive behaviour. Police believe the Protection from Harassment Act could also be used to curb violent husbands.

DNA triumph

Four Derbyshire men were convicted of killing a badger after DNA from the animal matched blood on a knife and overalls found on the men. They were Garry Shaw, 26, Russell Pettipiece, 37, David Wragg, 32, and Michael Holland, 32.

Shotgun killing

A teenager was shot dead on her doorstep by her former fiancé, who later rang the police to confess the killing before turning the shotgun on himself. Heidi Hickmott, 19, had recently broken her six-year engagement to Michael Herd, 27.

Roped off

The "child's handprint" painting of Myra Hindley, damaged by ink and eggs thrown by two protesters, remained on view at the Royal Academy but only from behind a rope. It will be removed today for restoration before going back on show.

Cow slip

A cow spent 24 hours in the Irish Sea after falling 150ft from a cliff on the Lleyn, North Wales. High tides saved the Welsh Black from landing on rocks, but currents swept it out to sea. A lifeboat and fishing boat eventually headed it back to land.

Clark attacks
Hague on ballot

BY JILL SHERMAN AND ANDREW PIERCE

WILLIAM HAGUE comes under attack today from Alan Clark, the Conservative MP, over his decision to ballot the party on his proposed reforms.

In a letter to *The Times*, Mr Clark, the unpredictable member for Kensington and Chelsea, accuses Mr Hague of trying to get a mandate for his reforms — many of which are opposed by Tory MPs — on the back of his endorsement as party leader. Mr Clark, a member of the executive of the Tory 1922 backbench committee, is the first senior backbencher to publicly make his views known on the joint ballot, but it is understood that some other members of the committee and several backbenchers share his views.

The move comes at the end of a week when Mr Hague's leadership abilities have been criticised. Lord Tebbit, the former party chairman, criti-

cised Mr Hague for accusing Tony Blair of making political capital out of the funeral of the Princess of Wales. Lord Parkinson, the present chairman, declined to endorse his leader's comments.

In his letter, Mr Clark opposes the decision to send out a ballot paper with only one question — on the endorsement of Mr Hague as party leader and the principles of his reforms.

"So the whole Conservative party is being told, ahead of any detailed debate, to confer a blank cheque on a small coterie of management consultants to proceed as they think fit," he said.

One senior member of the committee said, however: "The party is not being bounced into policy changes which will be set in concrete."

War of Hague's Ear, page 20
Letters, page 25

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Prince thanks public for their sympathy

On his first public appearance since the funeral, the Prince of Wales praised his sons, writes Alan Hamilton

THE Prince of Wales, in his first public appearance since the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, yesterday offered the heartfelt thanks of himself and his sons for the public response to the Princess's death.

Speaking in Manchester, the Prince said that the torrent of tributes and some 250,000 letters of condolence from around the world had helped enormously at an extraordinarily difficult time. He also praised Prince William and Prince Harry for handling their mother's death and its associated events with courage and dignity.

On the Princess's death the Prince cancelled all his public engagements, including visits to Berlin, Prague and Salzburg. However, he chose a longstanding promise to attend charity events in the North West to mark a return to normal business and to speak for the first time about the death of his former wife. He made up his mind last week to fulfil the engagement.

The Prince, looking composed, chose a gathering of businessmen in Manchester to make public his gratitude.

knowing that there was a substantial media presence in the room. He was warmly applauded, and many of the 300-strong crowd in the street offered their good wishes to himself and his sons.

"I wanted to say how particularly moved and enormously comforted my children and I were, and indeed still are, by the public response to Diana's death," the Prince told his audience. "It really has been quite remarkable, and in many ways overwhelming, too. Probably many of you will know from personal experience of family loss in your own lives that it is difficult to cope with grief at any time, but it is even harder when the whole world is watching."

"I cannot tell you how enormously grateful and touched both the boys and myself have been. I am unbelievably proud of William and Harry. It is quite remarkable, and they have handled an extraordinarily difficult time with enormous courage and the greatest possible dignity."

The boys were coping very well, the Prince said. "But obviously Diana's death and

loss has been an enormous loss, as far as they and I are concerned, and I will always feel that loss."

The young Princes had been hugely comforted by the enormous numbers of letters of condolence. "These letters have meant a huge amount to us, and have made such a difference. We are immensely grateful," the Prince said, before launching a fundraising initiative for community youth projects in the region under Business in the Community, one of his charities.

Charles Allen, chief executive of Granada Television, who introduced the Prince, expressed Manchester's gratitude at his decision to visit the city at a time of such grief, sorrow and loss.

The Prince also visited Manchester Royal Infirmary to talk to staff and patients and to launch a £500,000 appeal to provide three more Macmillan cancer nurses. He spent the afternoon at Manchester United's Old Trafford ground to hear progress on an initiative to draw recruits into the Prince's Trust Volunteers. At present, 9,000 people a year



Irene Robinson, 4, giving the Prince a posie on his visit to the drop-in centre

join the scheme to work on community projects.

The Prince met Martin Edwards, Manchester United chairman, Alex Ferguson, its manager, Sir John Quinton, Premier League chairman, and officials from other clubs taking part: Liverpool, Newcastle, Sheffield Wednesday, Aston Villa, West Ham and Arsenal. They will publicise the volunteers in their litera-

ture and encourage young people to visit their favourite club in the hope of being persuaded to join.

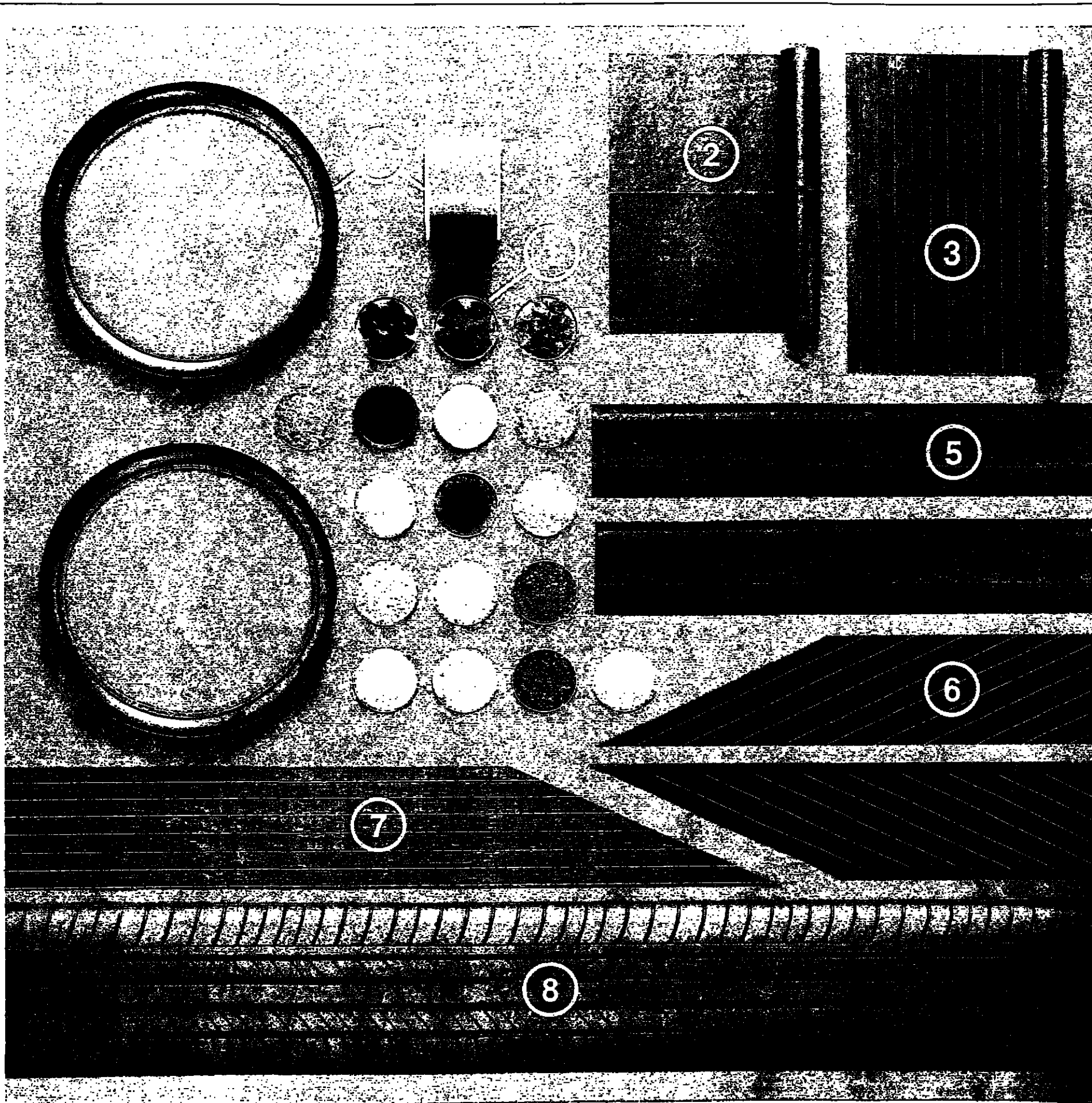
Wherever the Prince went, people offered their condolences on the death of the Princess. On the streets the crowds were thin, but there was no shortage of well-wishers. Outside his first stop, a Salvation Army drop-in centre, he spoke to Patricia

Beacock, 62, who expressed sorrow at the Princess's death and asked for her regards to be passed to his sons.

Later, the Prince visited Houldsworth Mill, in Reddish, near Stockport. The mill, built in 1865, is being considered for conversion into an art gallery and further education and community business centre by the Prince's Business in the Community charity.



The Prince joining in a game of basketball at the Salvation Army centre on his visit to Manchester



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2. Make an airtight inner liner by rolling butyl rubber into a wide thin layer and trim. This will ensure your tyre rises nicely and doesn't go flat.

3. In a calendaring machine, make body plies to form the tyre's carcass. The carcass gives the tyre its strength and also cushions you, even on roads lumpier and bumpier than German custerd.

4. With brass-coated steel cords, form a circle to make the tyre 'beads'. These will make sure your tyre sits securely on the wheel rim.

5. Take two strips of rubber and form the outer sidewalls. These protect tyres from

bangs and scrapes, and the chemicals added earlier help reduce the harmful effects of ozone and the sun. (Our engineers hate to see their pride and joy looking anything less than perfect.)

6. Now cover brass-coated steel with rubber to make belt plies. Place under the tread, to provide longer life and a better shape. Not what you normally associate with German cooking.

7. Make the cap plies by embedding nylon in rubber to form a bandage over the belt plies and under the tread. This improves high speed handling and stability.

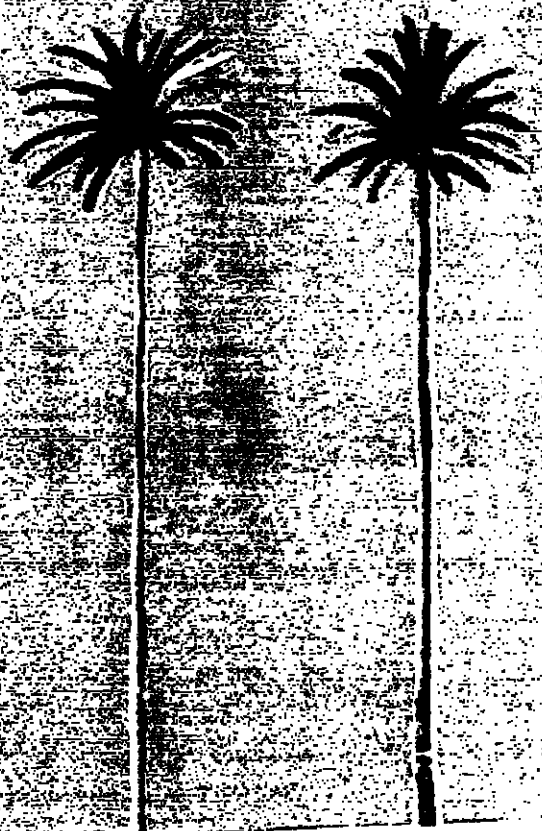
8. To make the tread, add chemicals and stir into the basic rubber compound. Heat and pass through an extruder. You'll now need your tyre building machines. Combine the bead, inner liner, carcass, sidewalls, belt plies and tread. Spray the outside of the tyre with lubricant and the inside with silicon.

Place in a vulcanising mould and cook for 10 minutes at 150°C and 12 bar of pressure. Remove and leave to cool. You've now made a very tasty Continental tyre.

Of course, if you can't be bothered with all the preparation, you can always get a take-away from your local tyre dealer.

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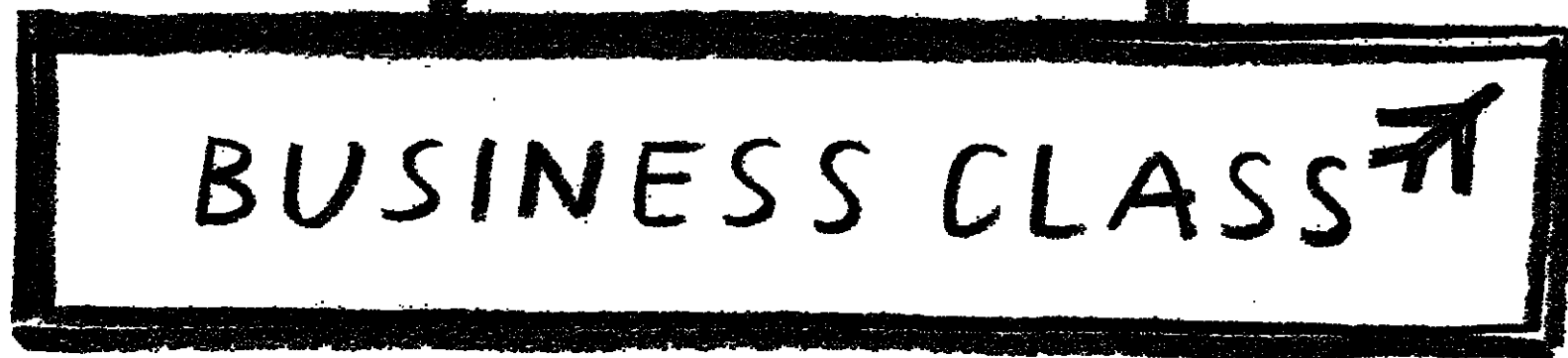
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Praise the Lord but, please, turn down the music

AN EVANGELICAL church which uses rap and hip-hop music to attract younger worshippers was found guilty yesterday of praising the Lord too loudly. The din from services was preventing local children from sleeping, rattling the windows of houses nearby and drowning the sound from televisions, a court was told.

Potter's House Christian Fellowship, in Walthamstow, East London, which attracts congregations of 900, was found guilty of twice contravening a noise abatement notice served after complaints from neighbours. The church was fined £100 for each of the two offences and ordered to pay £500 towards the costs of Waltham Forest council, which brought the case.

The dispute centred on the differing views of the two parties on what constitutes "excessive noise". The racket in question came from amplifiers during services and gospel concerts.

The noise abatement notice had been served in July 1995 after 25 complaints. Walthamstow magistrates were told that the church, which did not appeal against the notice, continued to play the music in the residential area.

Ruth Plume, an environmental health officer, responded to a call from angry neighbours one evening in September 1996. She visited a house opposite the church where a child was unable to sleep. "The noise was very

A church whose worship rattled its neighbours has been fined, reports Damian Whitworth

loud, certainly enough to prevent anybody sleeping," she told the court.

Downstairs other members of the family were trying to watch television. "All I could hear was the amplified music," she said. "You couldn't hear the television unless you put the volume up so loud that it was distorted. I judged that to be a nuisance." When she visited some nearby flats she found the windows vibrating.

Andrew Clayton, another environmental health officer, responded to a complaint last December and found that the windows at the back of the church itself were rattling. He then visited the home of the complaining neighbours. "It was difficult to concentrate on what he was saying to me," he said and explained how he knew the music was amplified. "It was 50ft away through a closed window."

David Vicary, the pastor of the church, denied that the noise was excessive. "The PA

system is used to enable the musicians to lead the congregation. Just a piano would be drowned out by the singing. This is just the music needed to lead the congregation of young families in worship. People come because it's lively and joyful and they leave uplifted."

Mr Vicary said that, if the music stopped, the church would be finished. "It's very easy to exaggerate the meaning of the word excessive. Although you can hear it a couple of times a week for a short period, it's not an excessive nuisance."

However, asked the all-important question of whether or not he would be turning the knob on his amplifier firmly in an anti-clockwise direction, he uttered — quietly — the only word that many less ebullient souls in E17 have been waiting to hear: "Yes."

At Your Service Weekend, page 13



Allan Bagnall of Northumberland with his world-record leek, weighing 13 lb 6.4 oz, at the 1997 UK Giants contest in Spalding, Lincolnshire

Tourists went on shoplifting spree

By a Staff Reporter

TWO elderly American women seemed the perfect big-spending visitors as they toured Scotland. By the end of their trip, they had souvenirs worth £7,000 to take home. The trouble was, they had not paid for any of them.

Margo Woodman, 73, yesterday admitted 12 charges of theft from shops across the country and Evelyn Raschke, 61, admitted one charge. Woodman escaped prison after sobbing in the dock and begging to be released. She pleaded with Sheriff Alexander Wilkinson, QC: "Please, please, I am sorry. I will never survive in prison."

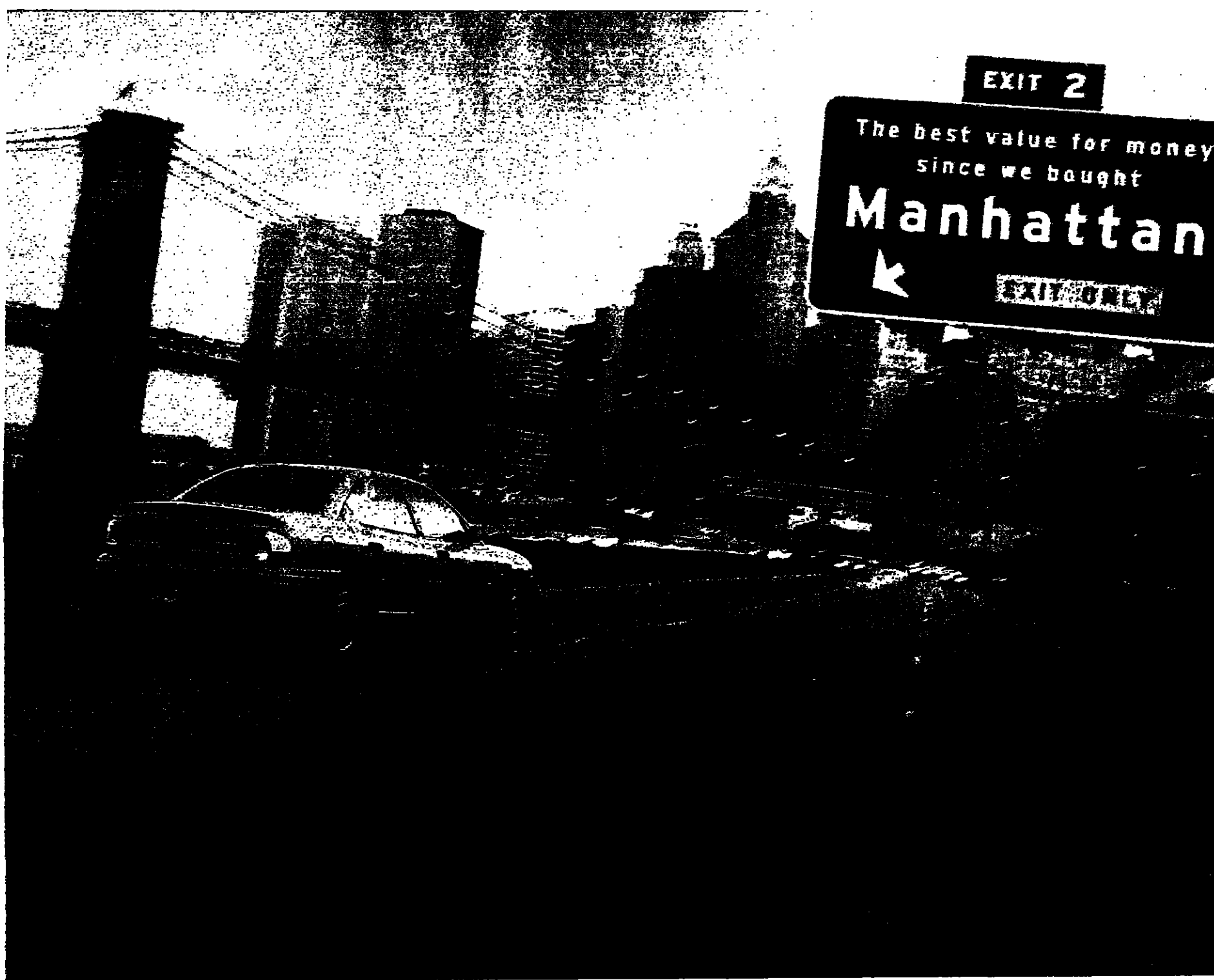
Taking into account her age, the sheriff fined her £3,000 and Raschke £500.

While staying at the Glasgow Hilton, the two women, friends from childhood, used a

hired car to go on a shoplifting spree in tourist spots. John Napier, for the prosecution, told Edinburgh Sheriff Court that it was "shoplifting on a grand scale".

Raschke told police: "I knew Margo had stolen things. I didn't know where from. She said she was going to ship the stuff back home in containers." Among her thefts, Woodman admitted stealing more than £2,500 of clothes from one hotel golf shop, £3,000 of jumpers from the Old Golf Course Hotel in St Andrews and a variety of goods from Edinburgh's Tiso shop.

Andy Gilbertson, for Woodman, a former journalist from Florida, told the court she suffered a variety of illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease, cancer and arthritis, and was "confused".



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Britain give
up fight over
Lockerbie



A sight that stopped traffic: the pupils of Christ's Hospital School marching to St Paul's yesterday. They no longer have to wear the uniform for travelling

Pupils walk out for a City lunch with all the frills

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE spectacle of 850 pupils marching through the City of London in school uniform yesterday prompted accusations of torture. "If I made my kids do that, they'd never speak to me," said Harry Rhodes as he revved his black taxi behind the tail of the procession.

Christ's Hospital School, founded in 1552, was marching from Cannon Street Station to St Paul's Cathedral, then to lunch at Guildhall to mark the centenary of their move to Horsham, West Sussex. Mr Rhodes's observation was based on their attire: full school uniform consists of ankle-length Tudor "house" coats, breeches or skirts, and knee-length canary yellow socks. The girls had frilly collars.

"They are used to it but perhaps not to marching through London in it in front of stopped traffic," admitted one master.

"They used to have to wear it to go home in but we stopped that in order to ensure we got them all

back again at the beginning of the next term."

Considering that teenagers are a self-conscious lot, they marched behind their band with great dignity. Only when the noise of the music brought office workers to every window, drinkers to the doors of pubs and tourists' camcorders zooming in, did some of the marching become a little sheepish. One boy blushed to his boots when his mother shouted "Helloee! Darling."

Every year on St Matthew's Day a portion of the co-educational boarding school marches to the cathedral for a service. This was the first time that anyone can recall the whole school turning out. After the service the pupils marched on to Guildhall for their lunch with the Lord Mayor.

Elizabeth Cairncross, the deputy head teacher, said: "We are very proud and grateful for our connections with the history of the City and we like to show we still treasure those connections."

Britain gives up fight over Lockerbie

By ANDREW PIERCE

THE hunt for the Lockerbie bombers is effectively being called off by ministers, who have given up hope of bringing the perpetrators to justice. The unexpected move has dismayed relatives of the victims of the 1988 bombing, which killed all 259 people on board the Pan Am jumbo jet and 11 people on the ground.

MPs have also expressed dismay that the multimillion-pound investigation is being abandoned. Only last month two senior British politicians and a father of one of the victims met Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Tripoli. Lord Steel, the former Liberal Democrat leader, and Sir Cyril Townsend, the former vice-chairman of the Conservative parliamentary foreign affairs committee, had talks to try to break the impasse over the extradition from Libya of the two men accused of the bombing.

A senior government source made clear yesterday that there was no prospect of the chief suspects, Abdul Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah, who have been kept under house arrest in Tripoli since November

1991, being brought to trial. He said: "We have to be realistic. It was so long ago. The time has come to move on."

Dr Jim Swire, whose daughter, Flora, was killed one day before her 24th birthday, urged the Government not to give up the fight. Dr Swire, the chairman of the UK Families Flight 103, which was set up to campaign for international justice, said: "Those who lost children find it hardest of all to cope with the idea of having the origin of their death concealed."

"The families whose loved ones were murdered want a trial because it might show whether those two Libyans are guilty. The two accused were only acting on someone's orders."

"We are not prepared to accept a compromise where financial compensation is paid out but the inconvenience of an international trial is avoided." Pressure for a trial will continue from the government's own back benches. Tam Dalyell, the Labour MP, has already demanded that Tony Blair set up a new investigation.

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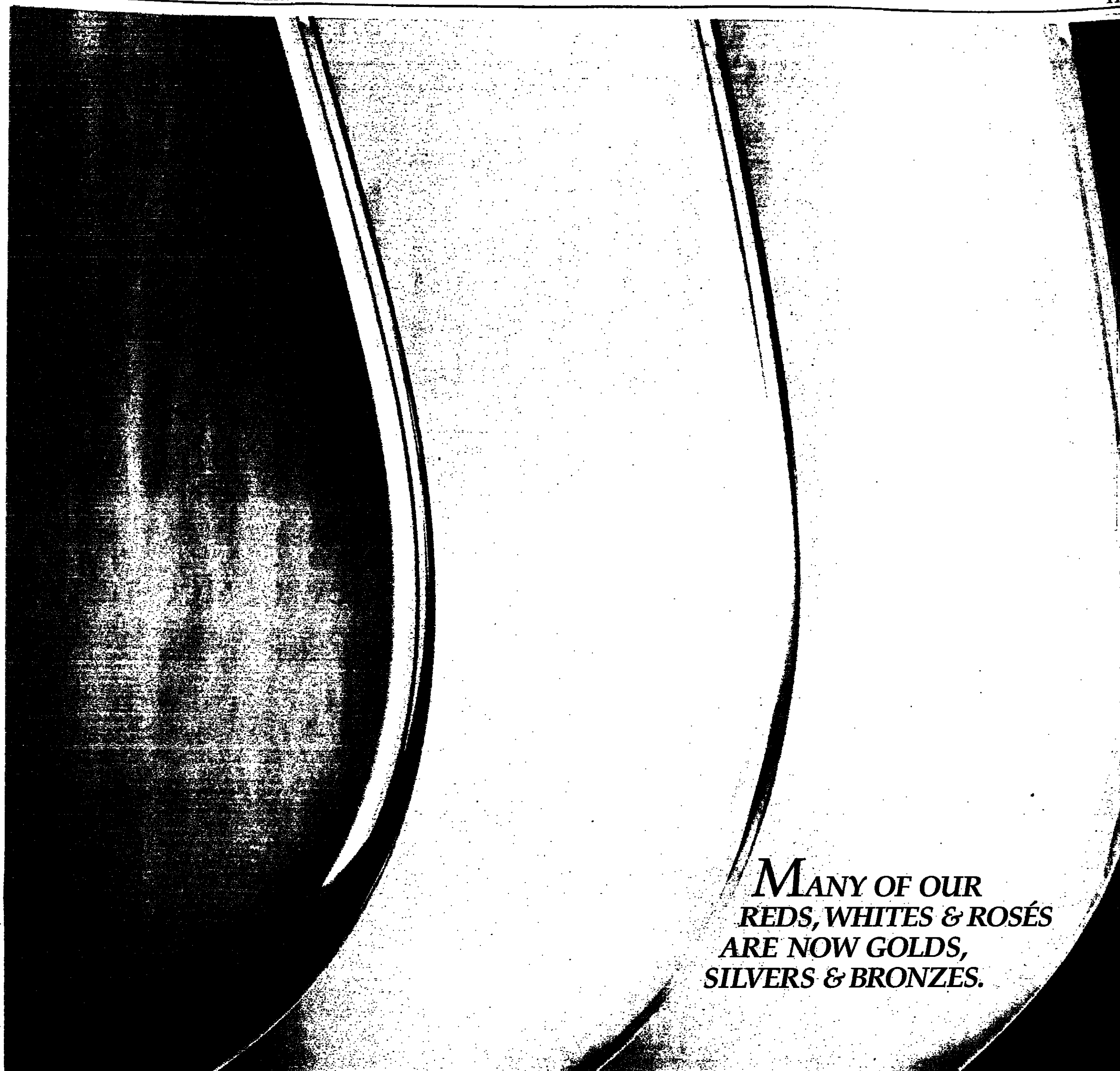
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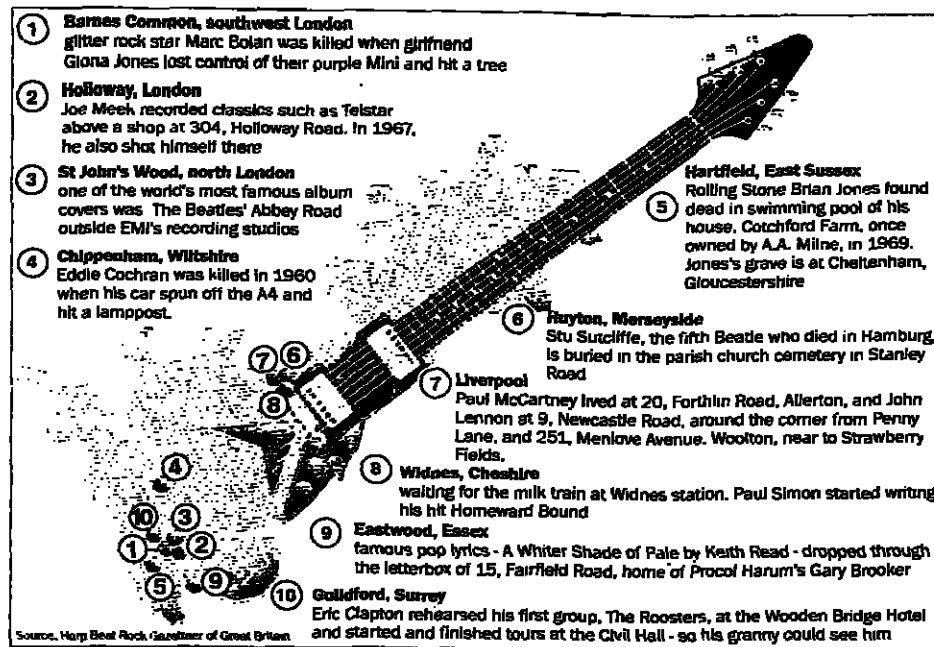
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Missing markers on the rock and roll of honour

By Kevin Eason

IN THE four decades since Britain became the centre of pop culture, hundreds of stars have left their mark on towns and cities.

Yet there are few reminders to point out where such world-famous groups as the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds and Genesis or singers such as David Bowie or Rod Stewart carved out their careers in pubs and youth clubs. Nor are there memorials to the stars who failed to make it into the 1990s — like the Rolling Stones founder Brian Jones, or Eddie Cochran — so that fans can make their pilgrimage.

While Britain's tourist literature marks sites made famous by poets, artists and politicians, enthusiasts of rock and pop have to pick their own way around the countryside trying to spot the scenes of album covers or the cafes where groups were formed. English Heritage unveiled a blue plaque to the guitarist Jimi Hendrix last weekend, 27 years after his death, on a building next to one that carries a plaque commemorating George Frideric Handel.

English Heritage rules say, however, that a commemorative plaque can be awarded

OPEN HOUSE

The Bank of England tops the list of more than 400 London buildings specially opened to the public this weekend. For the first time, a significant number of the great departments of state in Whitehall are included in the annual Open House programme, among them the Foreign Office, the Scottish Office and the Treasury building overlooking Parliament Square. Open House hotline: 0891 600061.

only to people born more than 100 years ago or dead for more than 20 years. No pop stars meet the first rule — a legion meet the second, including Bolan. The anniversary of his death in 1977 was marked this week by the Performing Rights Society which erected a headstone on Barnes Common in southwest London where his Mini hit a tree.

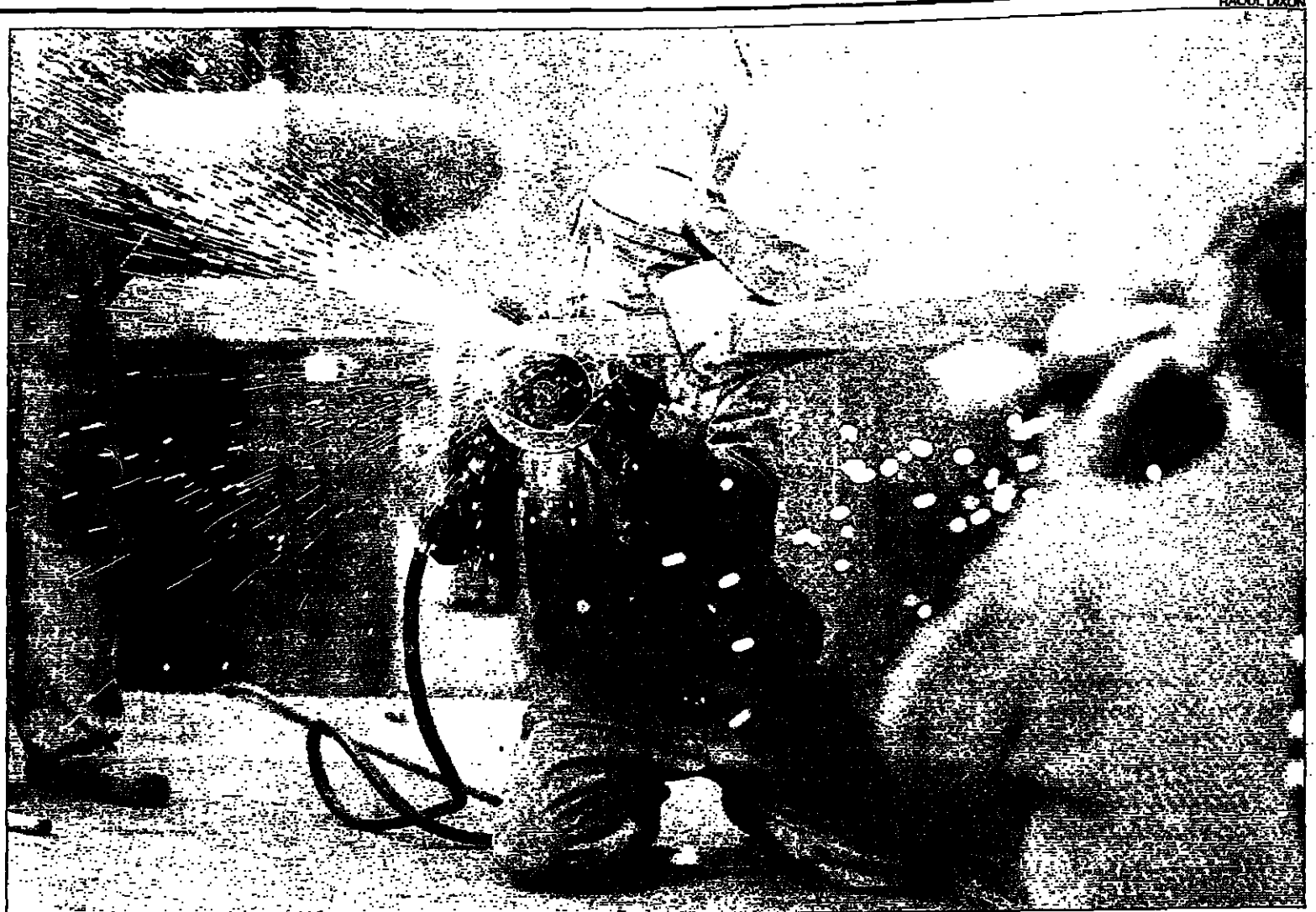
The site is famous enough to be a celebrated rock shrine, unlike the simple grave in Cheltenham cemetery where Brian Jones is buried. He was

found in the swimming pool of his home, Cotchford Farm, Hartfield, East Sussex, in 1969.

Eddie Cochran, the much-copied American rock'n'roll singer and guitarist, was killed in 1960 when his car spun off the A4 and hit a lamppost. The Beatles inevitably dominate the landscape of British pop: 20 Forthlin Road, Allerton, is where Paul McCartney was brought up and songs such as *Love Me Do* were composed in the living room. John Lennon's boyhood was spent at 9 Newcastle Road, around the corner from Penny Lane, before moving to 251 Menlove Avenue, Wootton, near to Strawberry Fields, the Salvation Army children's home.

There are also unlikely potential shrines, according to Pete Frame, *The Times* rock expert in his 1999 *Harp Beat Rock Gazetteer of Great Britain*. He uncovered the Fox and Hounds at Caversham, Berkshire, where Lennon and McCartney holidayed in 1960, playing an impromptu acoustic concert under the name the Nurk Twins.

Transport has also played its part: Paul Simon started writing his hit *Homeward Bound* on Widnes station.



The first wing of Anthony Gormley's *Angel of the North* is completed at Hartlepool Steel. The wingspan will rival that of a jumbo jet

Town gets first view of steel angel

As the wraps were lifted on the latest landscape artwork, Danya Alberge looks at new sculpture in the North

THE people of Gateshead yesterday had their first chance to see a controversial 65ft statue of an angel that will stand alongside the A1 outside the town on the south bank of the Tyne.

Engineers from Gateshead council and Hartlepool Steel Fabrications, the manufacturers, showed off the half-built statue in Hartlepool. One wing is almost complete and work has begun on its metal body.

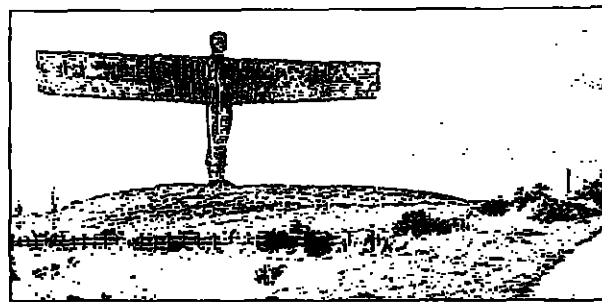
The *Angel of the North*, designed by the Turner prize-winning sculptor Anthony Gormley, has a £584,000 grant from the Arts Council's National Lottery

funds. Many local councillors have attacked its £800,000 cost.

When completed later this year it will be the largest sculpture in Britain, with a wingspan almost as large as a jumbo jet. About 90,000 people will see the statue from the road every day.

Mr Gormley, 47, confessed yesterday that the idea for the angel was not his but that of Pat Connolly, a Gateshead councillor. "We were discussing possibilities and he said: 'What we need is a bloody great angel.' I looked at the site and realised he was absolutely right."

Although born in London,



The statue as it will look when erected near the A1

Mr Gormley said he had an affinity and feeling for the North East through regular visits. "The site used to be a coal mine. Now the area has been filled in and landscaped but the angel will be a marker for years to come that men toiled underground. It stands for the sense of community."

The project is among many high-profile public sculptures that are changing

the landscape of the North East. David Mach's *Train* in Darlington, a full-size locomotive created from thousands of bricks, opened earlier this year, its £1 million cost also supported with money from the lottery.

Claus Oldenburg's *Bottle of Notes* in Middlesbrough — a huge bottle filled with letters — was inspired by Captain Cook, who came from the area. A commission

from Bill Viola for Durham Cathedral was in the form of a video, *The Messenger*, which showed a naked man emerging from a black void.

Andy Goldsworthy, the sculptor who creates works of beauty and delicacy with natural materials, is making 100 sheepfolds in Cumbria.

Paul Rubinstein, deputy chief executive of Northern Arts, said the total investment in public art in the North was well over £2 million.

Although there had been local criticism, with several people calling for such money to be used on health and the homeless rather than art, he emphasised that the works of art involved schools and community organisations. "Overall, community acceptance is very high." Additional reporting by Mark Henderson.

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The sport with triple the action

They swim, they cycle, they run - and they look good. David Powell on the triathletes

A sport born in the surf of Hawaii, and boasting some of the best bodies in athletics, reaches a new high in London tomorrow with Britain's first mass-participation triathlon, the swim-bike-run discipline that rivals the marathon as the modern test of endurance.

Of the 3,000 competitors who will make the Docklands triathlon the second largest in the world after Chicago, two-thirds will be first-timers. If their entry has been posted from a home address in California or the Côte d'Azur, so much the better. Britain's best triathletes live abroad. Simon Lessing, the world champion, resides in Salon de Provence. Spencer Smith, Britain's No 2 and a former world champion, in San Diego, and Annaleah Emmerson, Britain's leading woman professional, in Denia, near Alicante. Better to train with the sun on your back than the rain in your face.

This is the sport of the tanned and toned. According to William Newton of Total Fitness, a leading United Kingdom retailer: "Triathletes are a different market from runners and cyclists. Runners and cyclists will generally spend as little as they can and not particularly care what they look like. Triathletes are not scared to fork out a fortune. A lot of triathletes say it does not matter how fast you go, it probably matters a whole lot more what you look like."

Spencer Smith, a world champion who fits perfectly the perception of a triathlete - ponytail, earrings, Mercedes convertible - once noted that "people think we haven't got a proper job", and added: "They should come and do my schedule. I swim six times a week for 1½ hours each time, I bike an average 2½ to 3½ hours a day and run for five to seven hours a week."

Smith is not competing in London, choosing instead to prepare for next month's Hawaii Ironman triathlon, the sport's classic base which was established when 15 eccentrics entered the water off Waikiki Beach in 1978 on a course comprising a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile ride and a marathon run of 26 miles 385 yards.

Only one of the 200 triathlons held annually in Britain is over this "Ironman" distance. The sport has attracted 15,000 members to 230 clubs through a range of shorter distance events. Most of tomorrow's competitors will tackle the Olympic distance - a 1,500-metre swim, 40-kilometre ride and 10-kilometre run. It is the distance at which Lessing is world champion.

The top competitors can earn about £750,000 a year, more than the annual turnover of the British Triathlon Association. Emmerson, who is among Europe's best women triathletes but is not yet one of its world stars, earns £20,000 a year in sponsorship alone. It is little wonder that the sport's clothing manufacturers want their logos on her. She could step off the bike and on to the catwalk.

Triathletes inhabit a world of heart-rate monitors, energy bars

The Times will publish the complete list of finishers in the London Triathlon on Monday

and exotic locations. Triathlete magazine reports from Malibu, Honolulu and Surfer's Paradise. Switch to 220, another dedicated triathlon magazine, and you read a report from Rogart complaining about "skimpy underpants" worn in a race. "Shocking, lewd and disgusting seeing these sweating leg-pumping men with hardly anything on their bottoms."

How can you argue, though, with a sport which is the ideal combination of aerobic activity, training, toning and conditioning,

which combines three Olympic sports, and which will join the Olympic programme at Sydney?

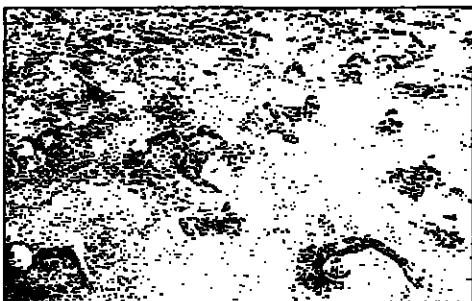
Lessing said: "Most people think of triathlons being for athletes who are abnormal, but it is something most people can do." All you need is a bike, trainers, swimming costume and, in British waters, a wetsuit. You may not be good at it but turn up with Oakley sunglasses, ponytail and tri-trunks, and you will at least look as if you are.

Sport, page 51



World champion Lessing in action: "It's something that most people can do," he says

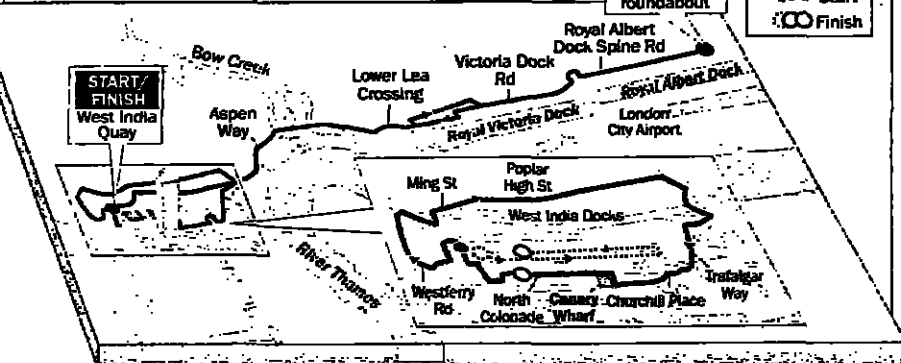
■ Simon Lessing: Age 26. Height 6ft 3in. Weight 11st 11lb. Born and raised in South Africa, has competed for Britain since 1989, winning four world titles and three European championships. Lives in South of France. In the London Triathlon, will be defending an unbeaten record for the year, having won all seven events in which he has taken part.



Ironman swimmers in Hawaii

A CAPITAL SWIM - BIKE - RUN

Twelve waves of competitors will take part in the triathlon. The starting times are: 7.30 Army, Navy, Air Force; 7.35 Olympic Men 35-39; 8.20 Olympic Men 17-20, 21-24, 50-59, 60+; 8.25 Olympic Men 40-44, 45-49; 9.10 Olympic Men 25-29; 10.00 Olympic Men 30-34; 10.45 Teams, Corporate Relay Teams; 11.25 Olympic Women, All age groups; 12.00 Sprint Men, All ages; 12.05 Sprint Women, All ages; 12.40 Elite Men; 12.44 Elite Women



BASIC FACTS

□ An Olympic-distance triathlon lasts anything between two and four hours, but there are shorter distances.

□ Olympic distances are 1,500-metre swim, 40-kilometre bike, 10-kilometre run. Sprint distances are 500-metre swim, 13-kilometre bike, 7-kilometre run. In the relay, teams of three compete over the Olympic distance with one swimming, one cycling, one running.

□ Basic kit - trainers, tri-trunks, tri-vest, bike and helmet - costs about £200 for juniors, but costs exceed £1,000 at club level. Made-to-measure wetsuits cost £200, and an aluminium bike with aerodynamic wheels and aero bars can be £5,000.

□ Contact the British Triathlon Association for a Do Tri starter pack at PO Box 26, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 2ZR, tel 01530 414234.



Model looks: Emmerson earns £20,000 a year in sponsorship

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Narrow escape should force ministers to rethink their plans

The wafer-thin majority for Welsh devolution is the worst possible basis on which to introduce a major constitutional change. Of course, a margin of 0.6 per cent will allow the Government to proceed with legislation this winter and it has a large enough Commons majority to see off likely parliamentary challenges. But it is ludicrous to pretend that the result represents "the settled will" of the Welsh people, as was

said of the decisive result in Scotland a week ago. Contrast the two votes: in Scotland, more than three fifths turned out and nearly three quarters supported a Scottish parliament; but in Wales barely a half turned out and a similar proportion supported devolution. This means that, while 45 per cent of the registered electorate in Scotland voted "yes", just a quarter did in Wales. Even if some adjustment is made for the age of the

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

register, compiled last October and eroded by deaths and moves, it is likely that, at most, three in ten adults in Wales backed devolution. Admittedly, turnout is even lower in local or European elections, so a tiny majority still counts. But now that referendums are becoming a regular, rather than occasional, feature of British political life, it is

time to draw up more formal rules. As Robert Hazell, of the Constitution Unit, argued in *The Times* last Tuesday, there are questions about when governments should be obliged to hold referendums and about a fair balance between both sides in the campaigns (the "yes" groups enjoyed a huge financial and propaganda advantage in

Scotland and Wales). Formal thresholds of either turnout or proportions of the electorate have been discredited among devolution supporters after the Scottish proposals failed in 1979 because of such a requirement. But the case for some form of threshold is strengthened by the Welsh result. For Tony Blair, the outcome at least continues his run of successes. However, the bitter arguments within the Welsh Labour Party are

likely to continue with the pro-devolution MPs angry about the activities of the five MPs in the "no" camp. It was the huge "yes" votes in nationalist areas that turned the result. Moreover, the ambiguous outcome in Wales is hardly like to set off a chain reaction of demands for regional government in England, aside from the North East. The ebullience of Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary, claiming a "stunning" victory, was balanced by the

more cautious response of Mr Blair, who said it was important to respond "to the fears that were expressed by people". Mr Davies was no doubt relieved at the narrow escape, both for him and his strategy. But the Government cannot press ahead as if Welsh devolution had been overwhelmingly endorsed. Ministers should review their plans.

PETER RIDDELL
CHRIS HARRIS



Roynon: newcomer

Londoner has the last word

By NICHOLAS WATT

THE WELSH were left agog as the last result of referendum night, which decided the contest, was read aloud in stuttering, halting Welsh — in a broad London accent.

Bradley Roynon, 46, Carmarthenshire's new returning officer, who moved to Wales in June, struggled to declare the result at 3.50am. He spent the day of the poll rehearsing his lines and had instructed his Welsh-speaking officials to write out the result in phonetics.

Mr Roynon, chief executive of Carmarthenshire County Council, said later: "We had to insert the numbers at the last minute. But the difficult bit was the official text leading up to the figures. I felt it was important to make the effort because Carmarthenshire is a strong Welsh-speaking area."

With the help of his staff Mr Roynon now hopes to improve his Welsh, which has equal status with English in the Principality.

Wafer-thin victory rescues Labour from humiliation

By VALERIE ELLIOTT

IN A cliffhanger of a count, Wales backed the creation of an assembly by the narrowest of margins, saving the Prime Minister from a damaging defeat on a central election pledge. The country decided by 6,721 votes — 0.6 per cent — to back the Government's plan: 559,419 voted "yes" (50.3 per cent) and 552,698, "no" (49.7 per cent).

Tony Blair's visits to Wales in the last week of the referendum campaign were vital in achieving the final swing to the "yes" camp. Labour strategists claimed yesterday. They believe that the personal appeal he issued to voters in Cardiff and Wrexham helped to prevent an even bigger "no" vote in these anglicised areas.

Although the party was

saved from humiliation, strategists cited various reasons for the failure to achieve a more emphatic victory. Apathy had all along been viewed by supporters of devolution as a serious obstacle. The overall turnout on Thursday was 50 per cent, but in border areas which gave a "no", between 41 and 46 per cent voted. Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire, in the northeast, and Newport, Cardiff and Torfaen, in the southeast, showed a distinct lack of enthusiasm.

The suspension of campaigning in the week after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales was also seen as having produced a loss of momentum for the "yes" camp. Ministers had planned to step up the campaign in the first week of

September, setting out the merits of a Welsh assembly.

Some Labour supporters thought the Government should have funded the "no" and "yes" campaigns to produce information leaflets, as was the case in the 1979 referendum. Devolution enthusiasts considered the Welsh Office's leaflets too bland. One government source accused the media of focusing on Labour dissension rather than on substantive issues.

Yet the results generally ran along traditional political lines, with North pitted against South, English-speakers against Welsh-speakers, rural heartlands against conurbations. The "yes" vote did see an unusual alliance between Welsh-speaking areas in the North and West and Labour strongholds in the valleys.

The result in Neath and Port Talbot, where Peter Hain, the Welsh Office minister, has his constituency, was a personal triumph: it was the largest "yes" vote, at 66.5 per cent. In Anglesey, the slimmest of the majority for devolution was attributable to an intrinsically strong Tory vote. At general elections, Tories vote for Plaid Cymru to keep Labour out; on devolution they showed their true colours.

The clinching last result of the night, in Carmarthenshire, was a particular source of pride to Nick Ainger, a local MP and aide to Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary.

Leading article, page 25

Assembling the great and keen

TELEVISION weather presenter Sian Lloyd, who has a first-class degree in Welsh and was a prominent "yes" campaigner, declared recently that she would love to be Prime Minister of Wales (Nicholas Watt writes). The elections will give many of the Principality's figures the chance to sit in its first parliament for 500 years.

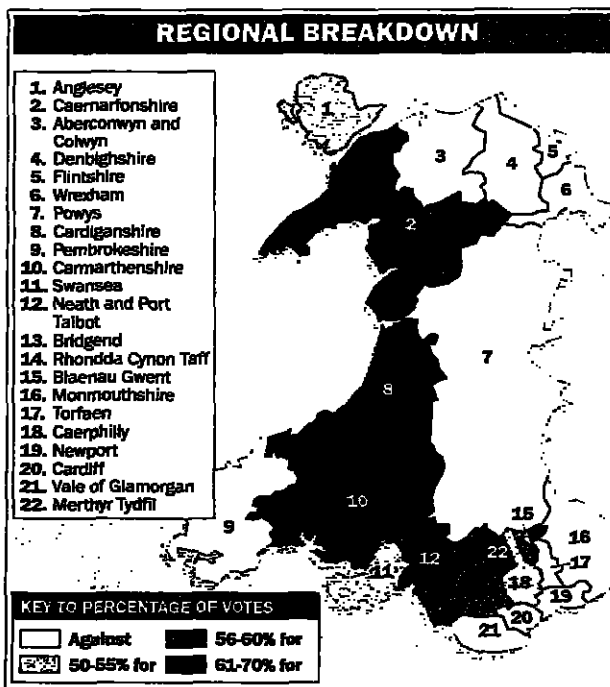
Tyrrone O'Sullivan, who led a workers' buy-out of the Tower Colliery at Hirwaun,

Mid Glamorgan, in 1995, was a leading light of the "yes" campaign. Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary, may wish to stand, while Iwan Wyn Jones, the Plaid Cymru MP, indicated that his MPs would want to give other party members a chance.

The assembly will also provide a lifeline to Conservatives such as Stuart Andrew, 25, who spearheaded the successful "No" campaign in Wrexham, North Wales.



"Yes" campaigners in Cardiff celebrating the final referendum result in the early hours of yesterday morning



HOW WALES VOTED

Region	Yes (%)	No (%)
Blaenau Gwent: 15,237 (56.09%) Y, 11,928 (43.91%) N. Electorate 55,089; turnout 27,165 (49.31%).	56.09	43.91
Bridgend: 27,632 (54.39%) Y, 23,172 (45.61%) N. 50,804; (50.50%) of 100,400 voted.	54.39	45.61
Caerphilly: 34,830 (54.70%) Y, 28,941 (45.30%) N. 63,771; (49.38%) of 129,050 voted.	54.70	45.30
Cardiff: 47,827 (44.37%) Y, 59,589 (55.63%) N. 107,416; (46.88%) of 229,571 voted.	44.37	55.63
Carmarthenshire: 49,115 (55.39%) Y, 26,119 (34.72%) N. 133,467; (56.37%) of 75,234 voted.	55.39	34.72
Cardiganshire: 18,304 (59.20%) Y, 12,614 (40.80%) N. 54,440; (56.79%) of 30,918 voted.	59.20	40.80
Ceredigion & Ceredigion: 18,369 (40.92%) Y, 26,521 (59.08%) N. 87,231; (51.46%) of 44,890 voted.	40.92	59.08
Denbighshire: 14,271 (40.77%) Y, 20,732 (59.23%) N. 70,410; (49.71%) of 35,003 voted.	40.77	59.23
Flintshire: 17,746 (38.20%) Y, 28,707 (61.80%) N. 113,181; (41.04%) of 46,453 voted.	38.20	61.80
Carmarthenshire & Merionethshire: 35,425 (64.06%) Y, 19,859 (35.94%) N. 52,320; (59.76%) of 55,284 voted.	64.06	35.94
Anglesey: 15,649 (50.90%) Y, 15,085 (49.10%) N. 54,044; (56.86%) of 30,744 voted.	50.90	49.10
Merthyr Tydfil: 12,707 (58.21%) Y, 9,121 (41.79%) N. 44,107; (49.45%) of 21,828 voted.	58.21	41.79
Monmouthshire: 10,592 (52.10%) Y, 22,403 (57.90%) N. 65,308; (50.52%) of 32,595 voted.	52.10	57.90
Neath & Port Talbot: 36,730 (66.55%) Y, 18,483 (33.45%) N. 108,333; (51.91%) of 56,183 voted.	66.55	33.45
Newport: 18,172 (37.44%) Y, 27,017 (62.56%) N. 94,094; (45.90%) of 43,186 voted.	37.44	62.56
Pembrokeshire: 19,979 (42.79%) Y, 26,712 (57.21%) N. 88,720; (52.63%) of 46,691 voted.	42.79	57.21
Powys: 23,038 (42.66%) Y, 30,966 (57.34%) N. 96,107; (56.18%) of 54,004 voted.	42.66	57.34
Rhondda Cymun Taff: 51,201 (59.47%) Y, 36,382 (40.53%) N. 175,639; (49.85%) of 87,563 voted.	59.47	40.53
Swansea: 42,789 (51.98%) Y, 39,581 (48.04%) N. 174,725; (47.13%) of 82,351 voted.	51.98	48.04
Torfaen: 15,758 (49.84%) Y, 15,854 (50.16%) N. 69,506; (45.48%) of 31,610 voted.	49.84	50.16
Vale of Glamorgan: 17,776 (56.74%) Y, 30,613 (53.26%) N. 89,111; (54.30%) of 48,389 voted.	56.74	53.26
Wrexham: 18,574 (45.28%) Y, 22,449 (54.72%) N. 98,787; (42.38%) of 41,023 voted.	45.28	54.72

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Plea by 'Unabomber' victim

"I CAN no longer cut food with a knife or tie shoelaces. It is hard to wash your hands when you are down to only one."

The author of these words is David Geier, a professor of computer science at Yale University, whose right hand and right eye were destroyed by a parcel bomb sent to him in June 1993 by the "Unabomber", the villainous Luddite believed to be responsible for killing three people and injuring 23 during a letter-bombing career spanning 18 years.

Dr Geier has written an account of his brush with death, published here yesterday. Called *Drawing Life: Surviving the Unabomber*, the book is a bitter and moving exhortation to be "judgmental" again, directed at all Americans. Unwilling

□ Arthur Miller, right, who knows a thing or two about *les femmes*, believes the life of Diana, Princess of Wales, is a perfect dramatic subject. Miller, 81, declared: "Diana was beautiful, she looked great, and she tried to buck the Establishment." Might we soon have *The Windsor Crucible*?

TUNKU VARADARAJAN'S NEW YORK



to cast himself as a "victim", he has used his own case as a metaphor for all that is wrong with modern, bleeding-heart, politically correct America. What does Dr Geier mean by "judgmental"?

He means a return to a clear sense of good and bad, of right and wrong, a sense by which the actions of criminals are not perceived automatically as the product of "victimhood" and "deprivation". In perhaps the most powerful sentence of his book,

he writes: "A society too squeamish to call evil by its right name has destroyed its best first defence against cut-throats".

Dr Geier reserves particular ire for the press, taking newspapers to task for describing Theodore Kaczynski — the Harvard-educated Montana recluse who is now charged with the "Unabomber" crimes — as a "mad genius". This notion of madness is, for him, "exculpatory", one which lets his

alleged assailant off the moral hook.

The naked anger of Dr Geier's writing ensures that his book is disquieting and endearing at the same time. He says: "For what he did to me, I wouldn't dirty my mind thinking about him."

"For what he could have done to my boys and my wife, I would strangle him with my bare hands, if I had the hands left."

Mr Kaczynski's trial begins next month, and Dr Geier intends to testify against him "with horror and dread and grim resolution".

In a bleak passage halfway through his book, he writes: "I would sentence him to death." □ *Drawing Life: Surviving the Unabomber*, by David Geier, Free Press, New York, \$21 (£13).

Game dices with green rage

TO THE delight of the perverse, a new board game has hit this city, named *'Dog Eat Dog'*. Players take on the role of a black-hearted corporate industrialist who must: (a) embezzle as much as he can from the company; and (b) destroy as much of the envi-

ronment as possible. Participants compete to make "wedges", and must design them in such a way as to make green groups apoplectic. A winning wedge might be made from a mix of baby seal fur, snowy owl feathers, Red Dye No.2 and nicotine.



David Geier: he wants Americans to become "judgmental" again

No parades please, we are British

SORTLY after I arrived in New York some months ago, Mr Gomez, my barber, said this to me while addressing my chin with a sharpish razor: "You work for a British paper... why don't you tell them to start a campaign for a 'British Pride' parade in Manhattan?"

Outside, a raucous parade raged — Puerto Ricans or Dominicans — and the sights and sounds of small-island pride were there for all to savour. I wondered why "British Americans" never do this sort of thing. After all, there is an ethnic pride parade in New York virtually every week.

That puzzlement was kindled afresh last week when, wandering down Fifth Avenue with a friend, I chanced upon the "German Pride" parade, with ruddy men and women rejoicing good-naturedly in their "Germanness", many wearing archaic German costume. I remarked how uplifting it would be to witness a sea of parading bowlers, flat caps and Union Jacks. "That would never happen here," she said.

An elderly member of New York's tribe of "confirmed British bachelors" later said: "Don't even think of it, dear boy. It's enough that we run most of New York's magazines and publishing houses, and so much of Wall Street. A march down Fifth Avenue would be the last straw. The only thing we can parade is our reserve. Always remember that."

Boat Race crews hit rough patch up the Amazon

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN MANAUS

THE choppy, piranha-infested waters of the Amazon may turn out to be the least of the problems faced by the Oxford and Cambridge oarsmen who are due to re-stage the Boat Race here tomorrow.

The crews face an arduous seven-and-a-half-mile course with patched-up boats, using shorter and lighter women's oars, and having had almost no practice in the tropical heat. The 52ft fibreglass boats only arrived in Manaus, capital of the Amazon, late on Thursday, with several holes in their bows and stern.

The regatta, in which Oxford and Cambridge will test their old rivalries and also compete against a Brazilian crew, was sponsored by the Amazon authorities, keen to encourage rowing in the region. But they failed to foresee the hazards of bringing crews and equipment into such a remote area.

The oars were broken by baggage handlers. The equipment had been ordered from Miami, where US customs officials apparently refused to allow the boats to be loaded on to aircraft in protective wooden containers for "security reasons".

"Rowing the hazardous course in tropical heat, with shorter oars and patched-up

boats, will be a difficult challenge," said Charlie Humphreys, 20, one of the Oxford eight, who took part in this year's race on the Thames. "It's never been done before. It will be difficult not to sink."

His team-mate, Paul Berger, said: "We've had no time to practise. There have been no boats, and on top of that the oars arrived in pieces."

A fisherman has been found to patch up the holes in the boats and 16 oars have been found. But yesterday afternoon, the rowers were still hoping for a chance to practise at least once before the race, which 30,000 spectators are expected to watch.

"We're not worried about piranhas and mosquitoes any more. We will just have to try to see whether we can make it to the finish line," said Mr Humphreys.

The varsity boats face testing competition from the Brazilian crew, who are more acclimatised to the high temperatures and who have managed to deliver their oars and boat safely to Manaus.

"The heat will be an obstacle. We may have to come to some gentlemen's agreement about stopping at one point to drink water," said Nick Burdett, the Cambridge team coach.

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Great Minds Think Viglen



Henri Paul, who will be buried in Lorient today

Last rites for fallen local hero



Lorient feels its native son has been made a scapegoat for the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, Ben Macintyre writes

A SMALL notice appeared in the Lorient newspaper this week, informing readers of the death of a local man, Henri Paul.

Seldom can an announcement have been so unnecessary, for it is impossible to find a soul in this Brittany port who does not know that M Paul is dead, that he was at the wheel in the car crash which killed Diana, Princess of Wales, and that he was drunk.

For three weeks, as evidence of M Paul's responsibility has steadily mounted, the shock and dismay of people in his home town have given way to bitter resentment that the world's obloquy has focused on a single dead man, a native son who made good but who has now come to symbolise exactly the reverse.

M Paul, 41, will be buried in a Lorient cemetery today, exactly two weeks after the Princess, after a funeral that was repeatedly delayed while police scientists tested and

retested the body for drink and drugs, and the world's media launched a detailed examination into M Paul's past, his personality and his habits.

The deputy security director of the Paris Ritz and occasional chauffeur died with paparazzi, now under investigation on manslaughter charges, allegedly snapping photographs around him in the tunnel beneath the Pont de l'Alma. Police in Lorient are determined to prevent a similar scene from taking place at his funeral.

Photographers have been banned from the Keryado cemetery by order of the prefect, and barriers were erected yesterday around the nearby Eglise Sainte-Thérèse, where the funeral service will take place.

M Paul's family has voiced fears that someone may try to "avenge" the Princess's death during the ceremony, and additional officers have been



A heavy police presence will ensure photographers are kept well away from the funeral and burial

brought in to keep back the press and an over-inquisitive public.

The bearded cemetery attendant at the church said: "If a photographer sets foot in here, the police will be on them in two minutes flat."

Many locals say that M

Paul has been made a scapegoat. Others argue that a tragedy is becoming a posthumous witch-hunt. "It's absurd. Look, if anyone else had been in the back of that car, this would have got two lines in the local paper, if that," the cemetery keeper said. Spokesmen

and lawyers employed by Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of the Ritz — so vocal in M Paul's defence at the outset — have fallen silent on the subject of the driver since tests confirmed he was driving with more than three times the legal limit of alcohol in his blood.

Dominique Mélo, a close friend of M Paul for 25 years and the family's spokesman, has been left to defend the reputation of the dead man almost singlehandedly, and not always adroitly.

"It often happened that we would go for a drive after a boozy lunch together. It was always Henri who drove, without the slightest problem," M Mélo said this week.

M Paul was a success story in Lorient with its high unemployment, diving fishing fleet and closed naval submarine base. His job was glamorous beyond the wildest dreams of his contemporaries.

But if M Paul was a big man in his home town, he was something else in Paris: living alone in his small bachelor flat, on a salary that was far from princely, he has emerged as a secretive and somewhat lonely individual with humdrum pleasures.

Parts of the press have sought to portray him as a villain, a "speed freak", an habitual drunk or a man driven to alcohol and anti-

depressant drugs by a failed love affair.

The truth was probably less dramatic. M Paul plainly enjoyed food and drink — he has been consistently described as a *bon vivant* — but police say there is little evidence to suggest that he was an alcoholic.

In Lorient he kept a powerful motorcycle, but in Paris he drove a battered Mini. One long-term relationship had broken up, but fully two years ago. He was seeing another woman, according to friends.

At the Ritz, where he worked for 11 years after quitting the French Air Force, he kept his nose studiously clean, and colleagues said that he particularly relished what he considered his close relationship with Dodi Fayed.

There is every reason to suppose that M Paul was celebrating, in a small but bibulous way, on the afternoon and evening of August 30, having successfully helped to bring his employer and the Princess of Wales back from Le Bourget airport. Then his mobile telephone rang recalling him to the Ritz, and he obeyed at once.

Perhaps, in the end, that was the banal key to the tragedy: a man from a small-town background, so proud of his job that he could not say no, even when his life, and the lives of others, depended on it.



The service will be held at Eglise Sainte-Thérèse

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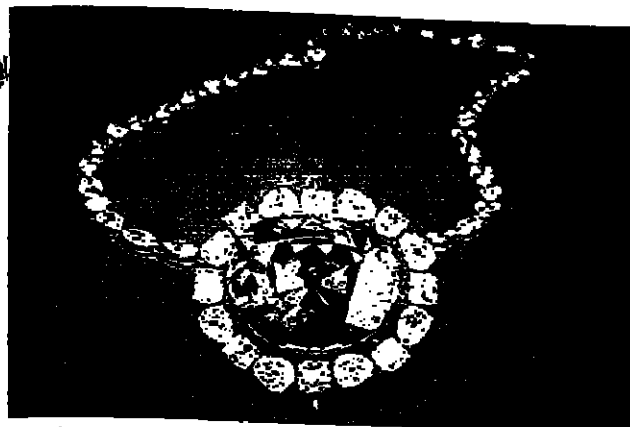
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Wonga - The People's Bank





The Hope diamond, on view in a new home today

Top-secret guard for 'fatal' gem

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

FRESHLY buffed, scrubbed, boiled and steamed, the Hope diamond today takes centre stage as the crown of America's jewels in a new Washington home guarded by a unique security system.

The deep smoky blue gem, its 74 facets glittering in a diamond and platinum setting, rotates slowly in its display case at the centre of a 20,000 sq ft hall which opens in Washington's National Museum of Natural History at noon.

All that stands between the tourist and the treasure is a beige marble display case and the same thick, water-clear glass used in the Tower of London for the Crown Jewels. Until two years ago, the Hope diamond had been housed in a safe, visible from only one angle.

Today it can be viewed from all sides and, at the first sign of a threat, will drop into the case's vault-like base, a \$500,000 (£310,000) design donated to the Smithsonian Institution by the company which has guarded the diamond since it was given to the Natural History museum in 1958.

Most of the security features are secret. The vault was designed in sections and constantly altered so that even its creators at Diebold Incorporated are not sure of every component. It takes at least two people to open a safe whose alarms will withstand the vibrations of millions of visitors but trip at the slightest sign of a crowbar.

The excitement has been hard to suppress among those involved in the two-year building of the \$13 million Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals. The most ambitious modernisation project of a permanent exhibit in the Smithsonian's history, it is expected to draw vast crowds.

"The Hope diamond doesn't just sit there. It moves, sparkles, dazzles and glows a deep blue," said an enthusiastic Jeffrey Post, curator of the national gem collection. "It has this extraordinary appeal for everyone who sees it. People are fascinated by its history and by the mystery which has always surrounded it. We don't have a monarchy or Crown Jewels here, but the Hope diamond has become a proud part of our heritage. It is almost like an American Crown Jewel."

Before it was moved to its new home this week, the 45-carat gem attracted five million visitors a year — 4.7 million people visited the Louvre last year — drawn to the extraordinary blue tint, caused by an impurity, and eager to ponder its curse.

Discovered in India in the 17th century, the diamond was first sold to Louis XIV in 1668 as a 112-carat, roughly cut stone about three times its present size. He died soon afterwards, launching the myth that the diamond brought tragedy to its owners. The trader who sold the gem was rumoured to have died in

the jaws of a pack of wild dogs. Mr Post claims he died in his sleep.

Passed from one Bourbon to the next, it was cut to 68 carats and became known as the French Blue. Countess Du Barry, Louis XV's mistress, wore the gem before she was beheaded during the French Revolution.

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, its guillotined next owners, merely added to the myth of the curse, as did the theft of the stone in 1792. It mysteriously appeared in London exactly 20 years later, a period of amnesty decreed by the French for crimes committed during wartime.

George IV purchased the gem, went bankrupt, and died. The diamond was sold to raise money for the King's debts and passed to the collection of Lord Henry Hope, the British banker after whom it was named and who, of course, died the same year. Francis Hope, the last family owner, was forced into bank-

ruptcy. Moving during the next century among dealers in London, New York and Paris, the gem was finally sold for \$180,000 to Evelyn Walsh McLean, a wealthy Washington socialite in 1911.

She blithely ignored its shadowy reputation, wearing the diamond everywhere, except when it was hidden among other jewels in her sofa. But her family, historians noted, seemed to suffer an unusual number of tragedies.

When she died after the Second World War, the Hope was bought by Harry Winston, a wealthy New York jeweller. He gave the stone to the Smithsonian Institution, posting it to Washington in a registered package carried by the US mail.

Three years ago, *Life* magazine attempted to value the gem. Some jewellers valued it at more than \$200 million. "How can you put a value on something of such history and extraordinary attraction," Mr Post said. "It's priceless."

JEWELS OF GLITTERING RENOWN

WHILE the Hope is the most visited museum object in the world, other diamonds have gained equal fame. Those from India include:
 □ The Great Mogul, known only through the description of the French jeweller and traveller, Jean Tavernier.
 □ The Orlov, originally given to Catherine II of Russia.
 □ The Koh-i-noor, now

among the English Crown Jewels.
 □ The Regent or Pitt.
 Other notable gems include:
 □ The Cullinan, a South African diamond found and presented in 1907 to King Edward VII.
 □ The Dresden, a deep green diamond.
 □ The Tiffany, an orange-yellow stone.



Armed men guard the diamond when shown in New York by its previous owner, jeweller Harry Winston

WORLD IN BRIEF

Polish rivals level as campaign ends

Warsaw: Poland's parliamentary election campaign ended yesterday with the two main political rivals almost evenly matched in public support (Patricia Kozla writes).

However, both the ruling post-Communist Democratic Left Alliance and the opposition Solidarity Election Action would need the help of minor parties in parliament to form the new government after Sunday's elections, in which all 460 seats in the Sejm, or lower house, and 100 in the Senate are being contested. The opposition grouping includes 36 right-wing and Christian parties and the Solidarity union. The Alliance and its coalition partner, the Polish Peasants' Party, has governed virtually unchallenged with a two thirds majority for the past four years.

Church curbs law agreed

Moscow: A law restricting the activities of "non-traditional" religious groups and enshrining the pre-eminence of the Russian Orthodox Church was overwhelmingly approved by the State Duma, the lower house of parliament (Robin Lodge writes). The Orthodox Church is vehemently opposed to the spread of "foreign" churches in Russia. Roman Catholics, Baptists, Adventists and Pentecostals oppose the law.

Mostar blast raises tension

Belgrade: Diplomats said yesterday that they feared an increase in Muslim-Croat violence after a car bomb explosion in the divided Bosnian city of Mostar (Tom Walker writes). The blast, said to have been the largest in Bosnia since the Dayton peace accord 22 months ago, demolished a block of flats in the Croat west bank of the city, injuring at least 50 people, 27 of them seriously.

Serbs seek a president

Belgrade: Serbs vote for a President to succeed Slobodan Milosevic tomorrow, with a close contest predicted between a socialist Milosevic puppet and an extreme-right nationalist (Tom Walker writes). The socialist coalition's candidate is Zoran Djindjic, who faces Vojislav Seselj, an unashamed extremist, and Vuk Draskovic, figurehead of last winter's street demonstrations. A second run-off vote is likely.

Sarawak pollution alert

Kuching: Malaysia declared a state of emergency in its Borneo island state of Sarawak as smoke pollution from forest fires in Indonesia reached danger levels. In Kuching, Sarawak's capital, schools, businesses, government offices and airports were shut. Malaysia Airlines said flights to Kuching were cancelled or diverted. (Reuters)

Italian court rules husband to blame for wife's adultery

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Italian Supreme Court yesterday laid down a radical redefinition of adultery, declaring that infidelity consists not only of sexual betrayal but also of behaviour "which damages the mutual trust, support and solidarity at the core of a marriage".

The judges said such behaviour includes physical and mental mistreatment of a spouse, excessive indulgence of personal interests at the expense of the shared activities involved in married life, and emotional involvement with another man or woman even where no extramarital sex takes place.

The Supreme Court, or

Court of Cassation, has acquired a reputation for innovative rulings in social and family matters in Italy, where the law has traditionally been influenced by Roman Catholicism. The court was asked to rule on a divorce case in Ancona, on the Adriatic coast, where judges had decided that the husband was the aggrieved party, on the ground that his wife had admitted a sexual relationship with another man. The Ancona court said her adultery was the "sole cause" of the marriage breakdown.

The wife appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that although it was true that she

had been to bed with another man, the marriage had broken down before then because of her husband's "intolerable behaviour". She said the Ancona court had not taken into account the fact that her husband had a fierce temper and had mistreated her both physically and mentally.

The Supreme Court ruled that the husband was the guilty party in the failure of the marriage. "It is the duty of spouses in a marriage not to betray their reciprocal trust; that is, not to betray their spiritual and physical dedication to one another, which lasts as long as the marriage lasts," the judgment said.

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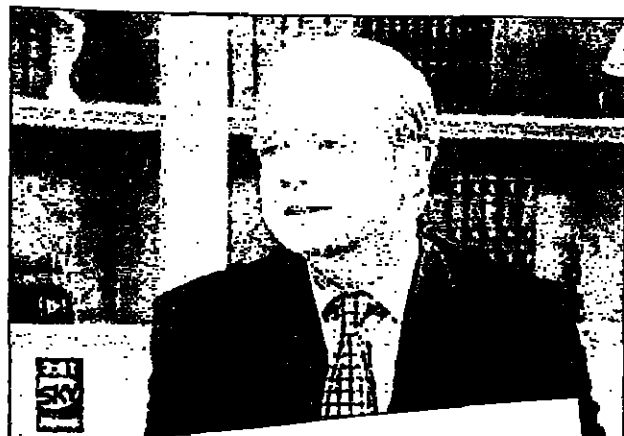
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Santa Carolina

WINES WITH MEANING

Sulphurous Tory rivalry in

The royal gaffe that started a bad seven days for William Hague had its roots in a power struggle among his top advisers, writes Michael Gove



Sunday 14th
A dog's breakfast with Frost - and William ends up with his foot in his mouth...



Monday 15th
Addressing his loyal supporters - William reads up with his Cecil hasn't heard...



Tuesday 16th
The press think William's up the creek - and want to break his paddle...

THE Conservative Party hasn't had much to smile about this week, but William Hague did his best in Stockton on Thursday night. Trying to sell himself, and his reforms, to party activists, he deployed the laidback humour he mastered at the Oxford Union.

"Did you hear the Prime Minister could not get back across the Channel after his holiday? The water was too choppy for him to walk across."

The joke hit the spot as far as the activists were concerned, but however wittily it caught Labour arrogance, it also uncomfortably laid bare Tory frustration. Opposition has proved more difficult and disorientating than many Tories, although not Mr Hague himself, expected. Life without limousines has not been made any easier because Mr Blair's honeymoon with the electorate, far from having ended, has deepened into an unquestioning infatuation.

It was frustration at Labour's easy dominance and, in particular, the manner in which Mr Blair posthumously conscripted Diana, Princess of Wales for the People's Party that led the Tory leader to launch an attack on the Prime Minister last Sunday which was altogether less light-hearted than his Stockton sally.

In an interview with Sir David Frost, Mr Hague claimed Labour had "leaked" confidential advice that puts the Government in a good light and the Royal Family in a bad light. It was, he argued, "shabby politics and bad government and ... no way to support the Royal Family in the future".

Mr Hague's comments provoked a torrent of criticism, some of the most wounding from within Tory ranks. But one controversial interview does not a crisis make. What turned the "Tories' Black Monday" into "William's wobbly week" was the sulphurous rivalry between senior Conservatives laid bare by their reactions to the Frost comments. The Tory Party became embroiled in a squabble, not

over what the leader had said, but who had advised him to say it. Over the past week the Tory spin-doctors and strategists proved they have learnt something from new Labour - the real enemy is the enemy within.

The battle for William's ear is, like the Labour Party's internal struggle, a contest between old and new, but it has nothing to do with ideology and everything to do with approach.

The "new" faction are concentrated in the leader's office, the "old" in the party headquarters in Smith Square. The new boys are graduates of the Hague leadership campaign with backgrounds in pure politics - the leader's political secretary, George Osborne, a former adviser to Douglas

other as a "nest of vipers".

Mr Hague's decision to criticise Mr Blair's handling of the death of the Princess reflected the thinking of Alan Duncan. It was Mr Duncan who briefed Simon Walters of the *Express* on Sunday that Labour had "embarrassed" the Queen. It was Mr Duncan who rang the Frost team to ensure they asked about the royals. Mr Duncan accompanied Mr Hague to the studio and subsequently defended the "no-nonsense" straight-talking of the leader. If Labour claimed to think the unthinkable, then the Tories would say the unsayable and give voice to the feeling in the country that Mr Blair was an opportunist humbug exploiting grief - the anger that dare not speak its name.

It has proved a high-risk strategy. Mr Duncan once told a friend, "I've been a Conservative since my balls dropped." He's needed them this week as his critics in the party have competed to do him down.

When he was first adopted as an MP, the Duke of Rutland praised him as a "proper little fighting bantam cock". This week other Tories have used different adjectives, and different four-letter words. Mr Duncan's closeness to Mr Hague, and his direct manner with those whose experience inclines them to offer different advice, has created jealousy among some colleagues and anger among other Conservatives. When they detected the Duncan hand behind the attack on Mr Blair, and sensed it backfiring, they saw an opportunity to take Mr Duncan down a peg or two.

Although the hostility to Mr Duncan and his friends is primarily personal, some of the arrows fired his way are tipped with ideological poison. A rigorous libertarian and fierce Eurosceptic, Mr Duncan has few fans on the Tory Left. When the former MP Hugh Dykes chose Monday to leave a Conservative Party in which he had been happy to serve as long as it kept him in



the Commons, there were more mutterings among "moderates" at the "dangerous" rightward pull that Mr Hague's advisers exerted on him.

Mr Duncan was not alone in being in the Left's firing line, but he was cast as villain-in-chief by the Heathites - the Rasputin of the Right. That made all the more telling the icy criticism of Mr Hague's strategy voiced by Norman Tebbit, the Rocky Marciano of the Right, on Monday's *Today*

programme. The former chairman thought Mr Hague's comments unwise. His unease reflected the feeling among the party's greybeards that an attack on Labour for exploiting the monarchy for political ends was, in itself, an exploitation of the monarchy for political ends.

The only difference was that the Conservatives had proved clumsier. Mr Duncan has always been happy to consider himself a "lightning conductor" for criticism. Indeed, he

had fulfilled that role during Mr Hague's leadership campaign.

But the vitriol directed at his strategy on Monday was now lapping. Mr Hague had been due to spend Monday afternoon on a walkabout at Victoria Station. The photocall was hastily cancelled by his advisers, who recognised that different tactics were required. Mr Hague decided to turn a private meeting with activists in Central Office scheduled for

Continued on facing page

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For the third consecutive year the harvest in North Korea has been ruined by devastating floods. Many homes have been destroyed and millions of people face starvation. Already huge numbers of children are barely surviving on a diet of tree bark, grass and roots. The floods have also severely damaged the nation's health system leaving it ill-equipped to deal with malnourished and suffering children. The people of North Korea are in desperate need. The Red Cross is organising emergency supplies of food to vulnerable groups and medical equipment to the failing health sector.

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fight for William's ear

From previous page

that night into a public platform for his counter-attack. But while he stuck fluently to the script, his chairman departed from it. Interviewed on Monday's *Newsnight*, Lord Parkinson described his leader's most-outspoken political attack on Labour as a "personal statement" to which he had nothing "to add or subtract". One Tory frontbencher argued that it was a supportive intervention. But if Lord Parkinson was supporting Mr Hague it was as the rope supports the hanged man.

Lord Parkinson's was not the only distinguished Tory voice to admonish the young leader in Tuesday's newspapers. An editorial in *The Daily Telegraph* dismissed Mr Hague's idea that Heathrow be named after the Princess as "faintly Latin American" and pronounced that his handling of matters royal had shown him to be a "meaner" man.

Out in the country, there was evidence of wider disquiet. Although 700 activists gave Mr Hague an enthusiastic welcome to Nottingham on Tuesday night there were rumours in Central Office that some Tories would vote "no" in Mr Hague's back-me-or-sack-me referendum to signal their unhappiness with his comments on Frost.

For Mr Duncan's friends in the Hague court, the reaction to a stand they had thought brave and principled was infinitely depressing. One Hague aide confided that it was "the worst week in his political life".

Enemies were seen to lurk everywhere. The Hague team accepted that the media was not disposed to give their man the benefit of any doubt when a new Government could do so much to dazzle. There was, however, anger at the way reliance on the Downing Street dripfeed had made even independent-minded hacks fear to defy the Labour Party by accepting that Mr Hague

had good grounds for his criticisms.

Hague advisers pointed to the date Mr Mandelson enjoyed with the *Channel 4* News presenter Jon Snow before Snow broadcast a devastating portrait of a Royal Family at war, with Mr Blair the still small voice of sanity.

Mr Duncan's allies argued that those Conservatives who objected were in no position to criticise because the leader's team had made controversial points when they had hardly troubled the scorer at all.

Although Mr Duncan could never himself be accused of insolence, he soon found himself lambasted for arrogance. One Tory thought the allegation that colleagues had not pulled their weight was monstrous. There was speculation that Wednesday afternoon's Shadow Cabinet gathering would hear calls for Mr Duncan's head.

That lunchtime the condemned man ate a hearty meal. Over penne carbonara in the Millbank canteen, Mr Duncan outlined to a front-bench colleague the method in what the media had thought madness.

Mr Duncan accepted that Mr Hague would never rival Mr Blair in popularity by telling uncomfortable truths but argued that it would be folly, and unprincipled folly at that, for the Tories to try to take Tony on in a hugging contest. Labour might enjoy stratospheric support by indulging in the politics of pandering, riding every fashionable wave, but they could not fool all of the people all of the time.

The Tories should not try to win affection, but respect, for their principled plain-speaking. As the party that had not been afraid to tell the truth they would come to be trusted. This "Cassandra Conservatism" suited Mr Hague's blunt Yorkshire manner and was already winning support from the nation's quietly conserva-

tive majority who were beginning to be offended by Labour's showy populism.

Whatever the merits of Mr Duncan's arguments, they did not, in the end, need to be defended at Wednesday's Shadow Cabinet. By Wednesday afternoon senior members

would brief them after the Shadow Cabinet meeting were informed before it began that it was not the usual practice to brief afterwards.

There was some surprise, not least from Central Office, when a briefing was hastily arranged. There was even greater surprise when it was Mr Duncan, and not Mr Halewood, who did the job. Far from being a reconciliatory question of spin-doctor procedure, it was an indication that the tensions at the top of the Tory Party would not fade with the memory of Sunday's interview.

The battles at the beginning of this week suggest the Tories have not lost the taste for introspection and in-fighting which contributed to their defeat. The sound of scrapping has now drawn other old bruisers into the fray. Although Mr Hague enjoyed a temporary fillip on Friday morning with the poor devolution result in Wales, his troubles are far from over.

In a letter to *The Times* published this morning, the acid diarist and Kensington MP Alan Clark directs all his waspish hauteur towards the ballot on Mr Hague's leadership and his reforms. The archly contrived protests of

support in principle, the dismissive reference to management consultants and the appeal to tradition combine to make it a Molotov cocktail flung towards the leader's office.

The opposition of grave seniors to modernisation and the tensions between strategists could endanger the prospects for any Tory recovery. Twenty years after he held the Tory conference spellbound as a 16-year-old schoolboy with a passionate plea for freedom, Mr Hague will mount the rostrum again for his first conference speech as leader. He will speak twice that week, making the case for his reforms and closing the conference.

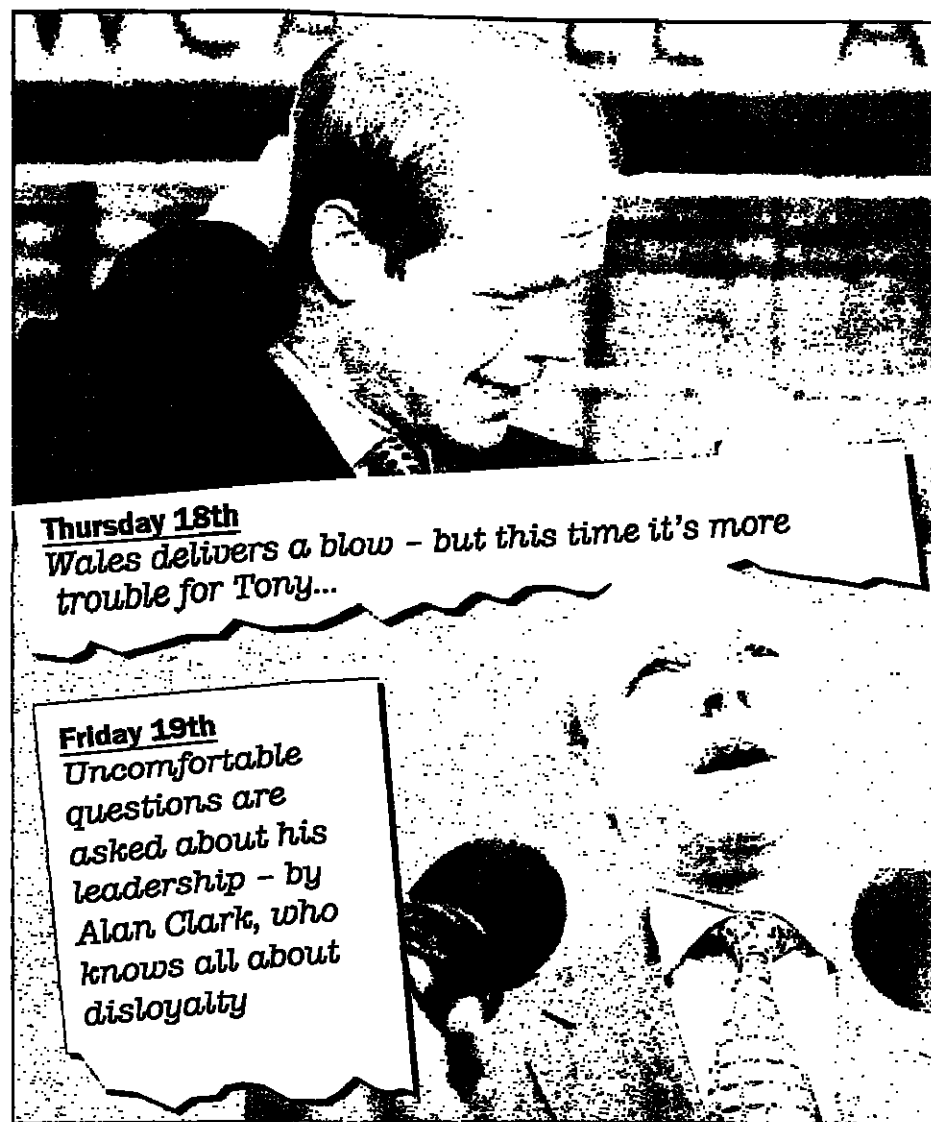
Mr Hague's speaking skills, as platform orator and Commons performer, have propelled him to his current eminence. He will enjoy a perfect opportunity to remind the Tory party of his gifts. But if his voice is obscured by an off-stage cacophony from rival interpreters, and his reforms derided by those who should know better what disloyalty can do to a party, then he will struggle to be heard by those he must convert.

Letters, page 25

“The tensions at the top of the party would not fade with the memory of the interview”

of the Shadow Cabinet were more intent on preparations for forthcoming speeches than raking over the words of the past week. At their meeting, discussion was dominated by a presentation from Lord Parkinson of the proposed internal reforms. Mr Duncan's name, and the wisdom of Sunday's intervention, were not mentioned.

The issue was not, however, closed. Journalists who had expected that Mr Halewood



Thursday 18th
Wales delivers a blow - but this time it's more trouble for Tony...

Friday 19th
Uncomfortable questions are asked about his leadership - by Alan Clark, who knows all about disloyalty



Wednesday 17th
William presides at a meeting of the Shadow Cabinet...

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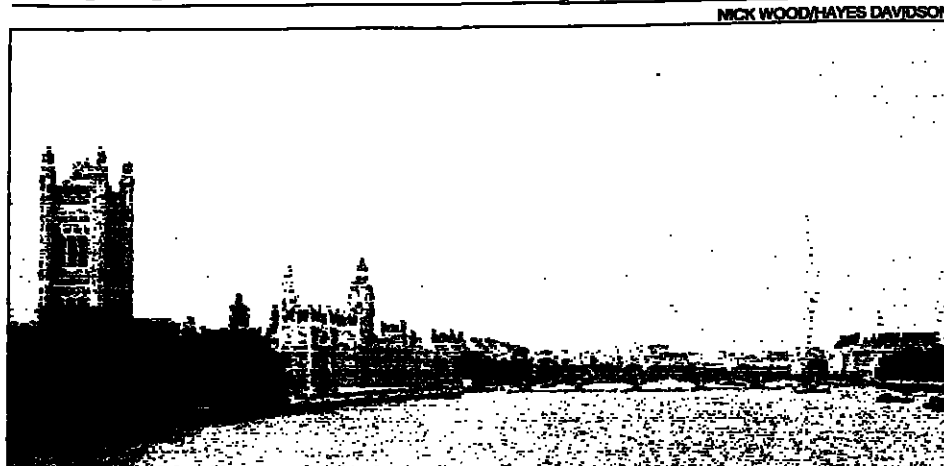
John Updike on Martin Amis's new novel

Philip Norman: Britain's top rock biographer, confronts the Spice-Girls

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Work begins on the best seat in town

The Millennium Wheel will tower over London, offering a new perspective on the capital. **Dominic Kennedy reports**



How it will look: the wheel will be almost opposite Parliament

THE most coveted place in Britain at midnight on the turn of the millennium will be in the top seat of the biggest wheel in the world. The stupendous British Airways Millennium Wheel, which will give views of the capital rarely seen even by pigeons, is about to be built on the South Bank of the Thames, opposite the Houses of Parliament.

The £12 million wheel, which can seat more than 1,000 people at once in 60 glass capsules — symbolising the minutes in an hour — is being constructed without any money from taxpayers or lottery players, unlike the Greenwich Dome, which is relying on £200 million from the National Lottery. It is due to open in summer 1999 and stand for five years.

The wheel may also become the ideal location for London's most romantic dates in the new millennium. Special events are being planned for Valentine's days, when couples may be able to hire an entire 20-seater capsule each. One cycle of the wheel takes 25 minutes.

Work is just starting at a site between the former County Hall, which is being converted into an hotel, and the Royal Festival Hall. The wheel, 500ft tall, will dwarf St Paul's at 365ft and Big Ben (320ft).

For eight hours a day, passengers will circle at a pace slower than walking speed. They will have headsets pro-

viding descriptions of the views, in many languages, beamed from an infra-red transmitter inside the capsule. They will also be able to choose specialist commentaries. Ideas include Gastronomic London by Sir Terence Conran, Theatrical London by Kenneth Branagh and Architectural London by Lord Rogers. Tickets will cost £6 for adults and £3 for children.

The wheel will take the title of the world's biggest Ferris wheel from the Japanese. The French claim to have a blueprint for a larger version, but nothing has yet materialised.

"As soon as they found out about it, they said 'We already have a plan to build a bigger wheel', which I think was a total lie," said Camilla Cavedish of the South Bank Employers' Group.

South Londoners are thrilled that the wheel will attract tourists. Research shows that 2 million people a year walk halfway across Westminster Bridge from the north side, take a picture of Big Ben, then return without setting foot on the South Bank.

The Millennium Wheel was the idea of the architects David Marks and Julia Barfield, a husband-and-wife team from London whose past creations have included less ambitious schemes, such as a water sports centre in Liverpool.

Most Ferris wheels are supported on both sides, with the

wheel spinning in the middle. But the Millennium Wheel will be suspended directly over the River Thames, so it has to be propped up from one side only. Solar cells in the roof of each capsule will power the ventilation and back-up systems.

Ove Arup, the engineers, are designing a mechanism so each capsule lights up briefly when it reaches the top, satisfying Civil Aviation Authority requests that aircraft can see the landmark at night.

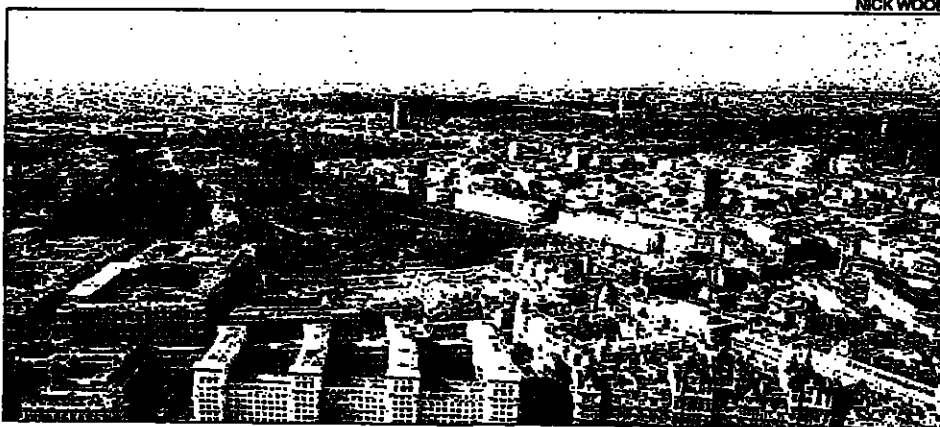
Passengers will board the wheel from a platform on the river. After each bubble-load of customers gets off, a team of cleaners will swiftly remove any litter before letting the next crowd embark.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and a former seaman, is being lobbied to allow a pier to be built next to the wheel, allowing visitors to transfer by riverboat along the Thames to the dome.

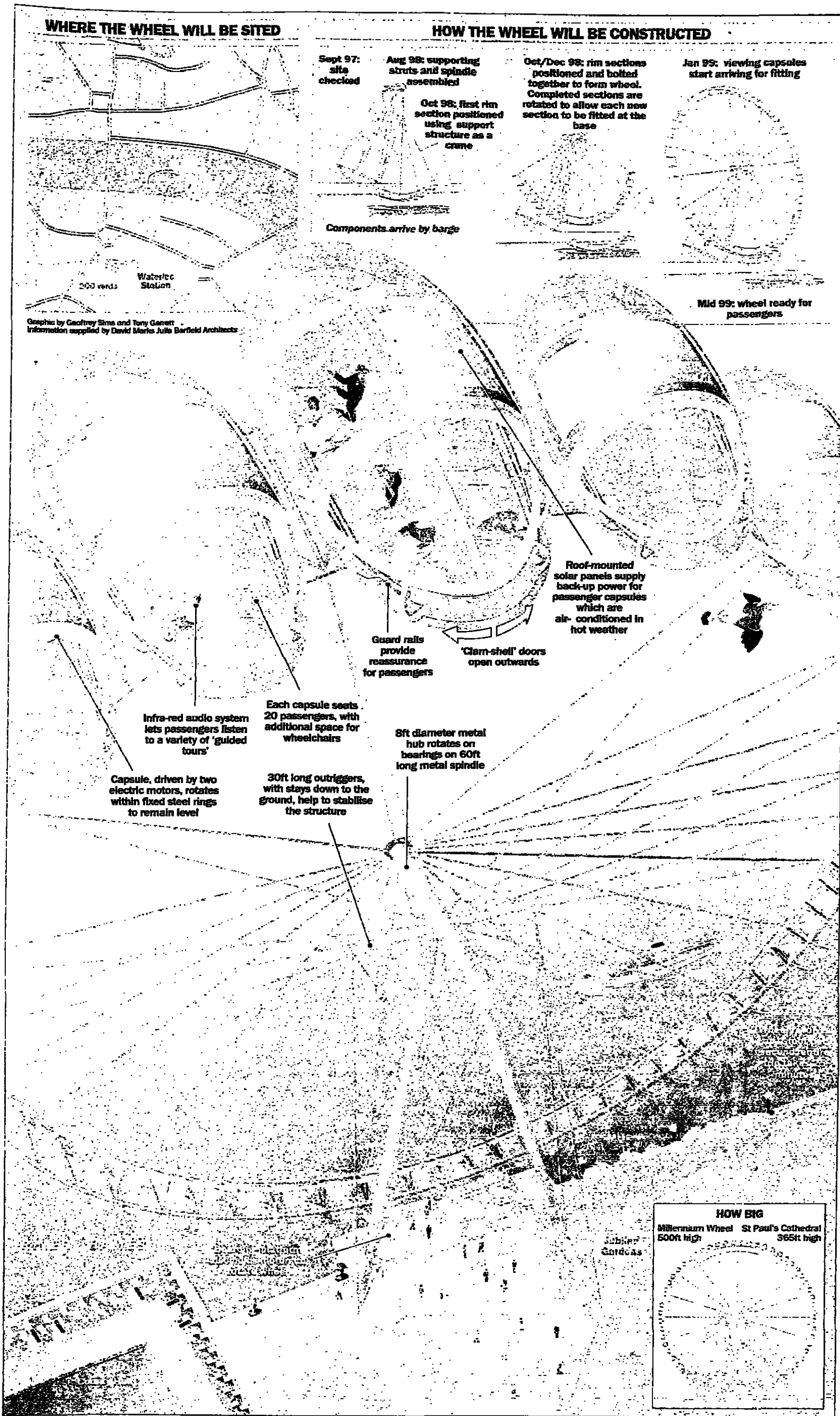
The Millennium Wheel has permission to stand for five years. By then, 10 to 15 million visitors are expected to have experienced a "flight" on the wheel, and it should have broken even financially. It could then be dismantled and taken to another city.

Few London pigeons have seen the views which passengers will enjoy, according to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. "Pigeons stay near the ground to find food," said a spokeswoman.

NICK WOOD



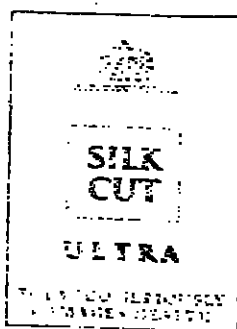
How London will look: the view north over the centre of the capital



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Old fencer takes his guard in defence of BBC's appetite for change

Sir Christopher is Bland by name, but competitive by nature, and he intends to win his fight to reorganise broadcasting

Bland reads riot act" said one headline yesterday. Bland insists he did no such thing, but if riot acts were needed there would be no better practitioner than Sir Christopher, far from bland by nature. The chairman of the BBC board of governors is quick on his feet (a former Olympic fencer), tough (schooling at Sedburgh, with its icy baths and motto "The hard nurse of men") and decisive: witness his speedy reaction to this week's furore.

Shortly before I arrived at Bland's office, John Birt, Director-General of the BBC, and Tony Hall, its chief executive of news, had been in there, drafting the statement that would deflect further fury from revolving news staff. An abstemious BBC lunch of bottled water and cold beef salad ("Oh dear, dead cow again," says Bland) was on the table. So he had been galvanised into action by the row?

"I don't need galvanising. I am galvanic every day by nature." I say I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall at the meeting. "You would have been quite disappointed by the absence of drama. It all took about ten minutes."

"But it would be foolish to pretend that the intensity of the reaction didn't surprise all of us. And we responded. Clearly, we have some persuading to do, and more explanation, before we go ahead. Everything in Stage VI was approved long ago, before I arrived. But the devil was in the detail."

The detail in the offending letter, and its timing, seems to have been news to everyone except the hapless Richard Clemmow, the head of

news who, "ashen-faced", had faced the fierce inquisition of Jeremy Paxman and the blistering wrath of Anna Ford and co; it was left to Bland and Birt to put the changes on hold, while tempers cool.

Birt, 52, and Bland, 59, destined to steer the BBC together through revolutionary changes into the 21st century, share a common experience. Both were turned down by the BBC when they applied for graduate traineeships on leaving Oxford. Birt went off to Granada and Bland to Currys. It was at London Weekend Television that they became *confrères*. "We work effectively together, and that's what happened this morning."

His office is directly above Birt's on the fourth floor, in a corridor perched close to the *mutinous* ranks of *Today*. The *World at One* etc. He has brought his own furniture: teak garden chairs, desk by David Linley and about 20 Eric Gill engravings, some quite erotic, from his collection.

At home he has a Mark Quinn (the artist whose frozen head sculpted from his own blood is featured in Charles Saatchi's *Sensations* at the Royal Academy). "We have a pair of his baked hands, moulded from dough, one slightly scorched in the oven." It turns out that Quinn and Bland's eldest step-daughter, Georgia, are an item.

Nobody should mistake chairman Bland for a suit. Beneath his corporate exterior there beats the heart of a far more interesting creature who once, while deputy chairman of the IBA, wore a



Sir Christopher admits that the intensity of the latest furore surprised him: "Clearly, we have some persuading to do, and more explanation, before we go ahead"

droopy moustache. I wonder how many BBC staff know that the chairman gets in early every day to follow, laboriously, *Mavis Beacon's Teach Yourself Touch Typing*. He demonstrates the "Car Game", copying out a sentence while, on his screen, a car speeds away into the distance as he tries to keep up. He is very proud of having got up to ten words a minute. Sweet, really.

His wife, Jennie, was the first girl he kissed, at 17 on a beach in Co Down, but he could not marry her for several decades, until her marriage to Viscount Enfield, now the Earl of Strathford (with whom she had four children) was over. Now the Blands, with their 14-year-old son, Archie, live in a house named *Blossmore*.

The BBC chairmanship is not his only job. He still does two days a week at National Freight, where he employs more people than the BBC. "You can reorganise National Freight to your heart's content and nobody writes about it," he says. "Nor does anyone ask you for a job there." Middle-class mothers are always writing to him about their son George who is reading General Studies at Basingstoke University and fancies a job at the BBC; but no mother ever begs him to give George a traineeship as a trucker. Far too independent and bullish ever to have gone into politics, despite his Bow Group chairman-



Valerie Grove

ship, he still keeps in his wallet the pink credit transfer slip for his first million (£1,325,517.70) made by selling his printing company, Caustons, in 1985, having bought it for £20,000.

He lives to compete. At his chateau in Gascony, guests are roused from their sunbaths to play boules or tennis; Christmas guests at his manor in Hampshire are obliged, as Anna Ford reported, to devise a pantomime with only ten minutes' rehearsal. "But my com-

petitive instinct at its worst was winning the go-karting championship at Jane Birt's 50th birthday party, seeing off Peregrine Worsthorne and David Frost."

He is a gourmet (owns Leith's cookery school and took a course there) and a poetry lover; can remember every poem he learnt before the age of 18 ("You couldn't blast that loose"), but at 50 decided to oil his memory by learning *Kubla Khan*, Arnold's *Dover Beach* and Browning's *My Last Duchess*, which he likes to recite after supper.

And he can still wield a sabre. At a centenary reunion of Oxford and Cambridge fencers "we all boasted about how old and unfit we were until one fencing veteran told us he'd already had a triple heart bypass". Oxford, captained by Rocco Forte, matched up the Light Blues: "Very satisfactory." The nearest he has got to a mid-life crisis was when he first left LWT and grew a horrible beard. "I rather liked it but I could see it was regarded as a statement, almost like taking yourself out of the job market. It had to go."

Staff are anxious and fretful but his responses remain smooth and often sardonic. "I see John Tusa has written another assault on us today. He suffers from the radio equivalent of road rage. I'm so glad his job at the Barbican allows him

so much time to comment on our affairs."

When I tell him people say they will leave rather than apply for their own jobs, Sir Christopher ruminates a while on his dead cow. "In the heat of the moment people say all sorts of things. But when they look at things coolly they tend to reconsider." Supposing staff start defecting to ITV? At LWT he was able to sweeten changes with share options and golden hand-cuffs. "Irrelevant," he says.

To Shirley Williams's warning that individual news programmes would be homogenised, he says: "She's a sensible woman, but what she fears will not be allowed to happen." What about losing the dynamic of rivalry between *Today* and *The World at One*? "I don't buy this argument. At present, people in the news can get four phone calls within 20 minutes from four different BBC programmes each asking them to appear. Nobody turns down an opportunity to appear on *Today*: it's the agenda-setting programme; I wake up to it every day. But news strands don't need to outdo one another, but outdo the competition, from other radio and TV stations, and 24-hour news on CNN and Sky."

I sympathise with radio presenters who resist the move to Tele-

vision Centre. Broadcasting House is geographically and emotionally the hub and heart of London. "Look, there is no point in pretending that Shepherd's Bush is a nicer place to work than Portland Place," Bland says. "It isn't. But this is an ancient building into which new technology will not fit." He has no doubts about the desirability of a 24-hour news service. "We already have one, BBC World, the world's best news-gathering organisation, available everywhere but the United Kingdom. The audience for it will build over time." The recent forerunner, with the death of Diana, Princess of Wales had shown "the BBC at its best", though it would be inappropriate to hype the BBC's audience figures: "I thought ITV did very well, too." Digital broadcasting will make non-digital sets as obsolete as black-and-whites. "No organisation can stand still. You can't stick your head in the sand and your bottom in the air."

He says he never realised what an intense spotlight the BBC operated under, nor how political the job would be — dealing with Cabinet ministers, with listeners' watchdogs and now with multitudes of high-profile presenters. But *en garde* everyone: this is just the kind of thing the swordsmen like. "Do say," he shouts as I leave, "that it's a wonderful job."

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A brief history of Mr Blair's best buzzword

Modernisation is no substitute for serious policy, says Sheila Lawlor

Modernisation, which is emerging as the leitmotif of the new Labour Government, has a long history. Yet each age has had its penchant for modernisation. Each generation throws up politicians for whom being modern determines both the style of politics and its substance. The modernising message of this century has been conveyed in populist terms, with increasingly meticulous attention to publicity. But can modernisation be a policy? Or is it a distraction from and a substitute for serious reform?

Modernisation is, of course, a slogan that appeals particularly to politicians who reach high office early. In the 1930s, Anthony Eden — who symbolised the new internationalist world after 1918 where co-operation and trust replaced rivalry and realpolitik — had a following because "he has youth and is modern".

Yet it was neither modernity nor youth that earned Winston Churchill his wartime leadership as he doggedly calculated how best to defend Britain and win the war. He resisted Eden's fashionably modern League of Nations causes and the crowds who cheered him in Ankara and Athens. He avoided Stafford Cripps's ideologically modernising demands on behalf of Stalin for a Second Front. Churchill concentrated on the piecemeal preservation of Britain and the Empire. He opposed the trend to social blueprints and wartime promises to the people. Although he did not welcome the initiatives of William Beveridge or Rab Butler on welfare and education, he did not veto their work. That was to be for the post-war debate, which did not, in fact, materialise, as politicians increasingly affected agreement on the broad lines of social policy, modernisation became the post-Churchillian orthodoxy.

In practice, Eden found the rhetoric of modernisation irrelevant to the international Suez crisis which overthrew his premiership. Butler, another early moderniser, never made it to the top, because Macmillan outmoded him. But Macmillan, despite building 300,000 houses a year, found that his vision of a modernised Britain that had never had it so good dissolved into the seamy world of Profumo.

The arch-moderniser was Harold Wilson, who fitted the part better than the pre-war generation of Tories such as Macmillan. Butler or Home. Where he led, Tony Blair has followed. The "white-hot" modernisation of 1964, when science and skills were to fuse under socialism, became in 1997, the fusion of skills and technology (less elitist and more buzz) under new Labour's stakeholder society. The aim in both cases was a diversion from Labour's internal battles, which then as now were part of the deeper problem confronting the truly modern government: the role, extent and cost of the State in economic and social terms and the response to the collectivist Zeitgeist of the 20th century. Wilson did not survive his indifference to this problem, and his politics of modernisation proved a chimera.

Since the 1960s, technocratic modernisation has had its managers in this country. Wilson was followed by Edward Heath and Jim Callaghan, but Margaret Thatcher finally returned to the unfinished business of setting limits to the State in economic and industrial policy. Mr Blair has professed his eagerness to build on the achievements of the 1980s, but in fact the style and content of new Labour represent a return to the politics of modernisation of her predecessors. Mr Blair is also embarking on a further stage of modernising: that

of the constitution. Parliament and the monarchy were obvious targets, though the result of the Welsh referendum shows that public opinion is still sceptical of the grand project. But constitutional modernisation, like the technocratic version, hardly touches on the question posed and anticipated by Margaret Thatcher: whether government control of social policy is a better, more efficient, or fairer basis for meeting popular aspirations than the other choices. That remains the debate of the old century and the new.

One minister who appears to have grasped this point is Frank Field, and his welfare reform proposals may well return Labour to seriousness of policy. For this, we must wait. But in education, Labour's other main field of social reform, Mr Blair's vow to raise standards will be overshadowed by the modernisation that was steam-rollered through the state system 30 years ago. That phase bequeathed the rationalisation of schooling on centrally planned lines — where comprehensive reorganisation was accompanied by a new "modern" educational philosophy. Knowledge gave way to skills and self-expression, with consequences for concentration, self-discipline and character. Public examinations and the basis for training teachers changed, too. The new social sciences took pride of place in the training colleges and subject specialism was dismissed as obsolete.

That technocratic modernisation of education has left a generation of casualties, especially among the less advantaged. Yet the thinking of the last government which entrenched that failed system has been taken up by the present one as class sizes and the content of lessons have become part of the bureaucratic fief. More powers and funding for town halls will mean less autonomy and money for schools. And Mr Blair will have personal experience of a Tory brand of modernisation: those church schools that Rab Butler's Education Act dragged into the state system, and were among the first to seek autonomy as grant-maintained schools (including his children's school) must once again become the fiefs of the local education authority.

The abolition of nursery vouchers is another example of how new Labour's old dogma of modernisation is returning the country to the heavy-handed statism of the post-war decades. The vindictive withdrawal of nursery vouchers from the under-fives merely restricts the choice of the less well-off parents. They will now be herded into reception classes at the local authority school, and at a far greater cost, which may yet cause Gordon Brown to regret the rapidity with which the Left was bought off by Labour's manifesto commitment.

Modernisation in politics brings with it its own problems, often conveniently bequeathed to later generations. Technocratic modernisation in the 1960s and 1970s has left a legacy: insecurity, poverty, a cycle of failure for many children and a bloated welfare sector. New Labour's determination to increase spending on target groups may well mean less for those whom the State taxes and on whose behalf it spends. They will cease to be freeholders. Independent of the State, and become stakeholders, overregulated clients of the State. That will be the real meaning of Mr Blair's modernised modernisation of Britain.

Dr Lawlor is director of the think-tank Politeia and author of *Churchill and the Politics of War*.

The Booker is good for bookies, but it has nothing to do with literature, says Simon Barnes

Why writers aren't racehorses

It is generally agreed that literature matters more than sport: that Marcel Proust is more important than Eric Cantona. Hamlet than Michael Atherton. Anna Karenina than Anna Kournikova. Sport is an altogether inferior activity. But when it comes to the moment for literature to steal the spotlight, get on to the front pages, become a talking point, it does so by pretending it is a sport.

This is called the Booker Prize. The short list was announced this week, and the book that really counts is the one created by the bookmaker. Bernard MacLaverty with *Grace Notes*, is 2-1 favourite. Come on my son! It all takes me back to the sixth form, when Ralph and I, tipsy on our second half-pints, would argue thunderously as to whether or not James Joyce knocked D. H. Lawrence into a cocked hat. We did not discuss their relative virtues: we wanted to know who was the winner.

Literature is swarming with prizes. I have a novel of my own entered for one of these: best not to go into details. And it is possible that the wise, all-seeing prize committee will come to the obvious and inevitable decision — how can this Barnes be so good? — but I suspect that in the end, I will have to go around despising both the judges (who are these people anyway?) and

the whole concept of awards. So meaningless, my dear, and so demeaning.

The snag is that you can't really say that prizes and awards are meaningless unless you have got one. Woody Allen was presented with this opportunity, surely the ultimate luxury. He didn't turn up to Oscars night when he won a hat-full for *Annie Hall*: he preferred to play his clarinet in New York.

The Woody role in the current Booker is being played by the uninvincible Madeleine St John (*The Essence of the Thing*, 9-2, get stuck in there, girl). "She writes novels and doesn't see why she has to perform," said Joanna Prior, publicist for her publishers. To be consistent, St John will have to refuse the award, or give it to the poor: but neither human beings, nor for that matter, novels, need to be consistent to be good.

It is a very deep part of human

nature not only to want to be the best, but to want to know who is the best. Perhaps it comes from the atavistic need for a dominance hierarchy, a need spawned when proto-humans lived in troops on the African plains. It is an instinct that made people who were good at messing about in water invent the sport of synchronised swimming.

Ballroom dancing is about to become an Olympic sport. Torville and Dean flung themselves into the crater of an imaginary volcano in a skated dance of doomed love, to win a gold medal.

There is hardly a sphere of human activity that does not have some kind of scheme for working out who is the best. It happens in my own profession. Journalistic awards, I mean, my dear, such an absurd concept... But I (like Woody) am allowed to say that, because on one or two occasions, the wise, all-seeing judges have

given one to me. (On far more occasions, the blind fools have given the meaningless bauble to whichever time-server was due for his turn that year.)

I can remember Steve Davis, the snooker player, a delightful as well as a fascinating man, speaking to me in the press room at the world championships. "It must be great for you guys to have a competition like that," he said. "Puts the whole thing in focus."

But it doesn't, really. Because there is no process of competition. Competition has been spatchcocked into an unrelated activity. Any person with a trace of vanity — and most sportswriters have rather a lot — finds it lovely to win. But we are writers. We are telling a story. "I'm going to write this Wimbledon v Crystal Palace match report so well, they'll have to give me the prize." The thought is absurd. Competition is incidental. I don't

imagine MacLaverty and St John were sitting at the word-processor, playing on despite the groin strain, telling themselves: "I'm going to get the Booker this year! Second place is just the first loser, baby! Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing!"

In sport, competition is everything. It is entertainment that is incidental. Occasionally, footballers say: "I am an entertainer." Any sane manager should sack such a player on the spot. Sport is a zero-sum game. It produces a winner, a loser. And sport's atavistic simplicity goes very deep: so deep, we try to turn many other things into sport, into zero-sum games.

But life is not a zero-sum game. And nor, for that matter, is literature. The notions of prizes, awards, dominance hierarchies, pecking orders have nothing to do with art: and yet nobody involved with art can resist them. The Turner Prize, the Booker, Young Musician of the Year, Oscars, Grammys, Baftas, and on, and on. Such things are as meaningless as they are powerful; rather like sport itself.

In my experience, there is only one form of creative fiction that is truly competitive — the compiling of one's expenses. I look on this as a straight fight between myself and the managing editor. I see it as my imagination against his damn'd be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"

The BBC reshuffle gripped the world — but does nobody ever get fired?

The British Broadcasting Corporation should be a protected monument. I refer not to its programmes, which will rise and fall in the media market. I mean the corporation. This BBC has become the *Neighbours* of the chattering classes, a turmoil of human emotion in a bungalow stuffed with goodies. The corporation is always on the brink of bliss, when the doorbell chimes and Disaster comes weeping over the doorstep. The fridge may be full but the heart is empty.

This week saw an episode that had us snapping our wine glasses in suspense. The plot was of Stanislawskiian intensity — and obscurity. The Director-General, John Birt, was harmlessly adding another wafer to the *mille feuille* of his bureaucracy. Five new executives with attendant retinues were to "slim down" the BBC's sprawling something, in preparation for a digital something else. There would be more managers, but they would be balanced by a 30 per cent cut in budgets and staff. To a centralist this is standard process. The plebs might revolt and John Tusa write to *The Guardian*. But trouble could be bought off with promotion, pay and titles. It was boring internal stuff, like a new manager at the local bank.

Then everything exploded. This was the BBC. A management reshuffle might seem boring to headquarters but not to staff who dine in the gilded halls of Fame, and meet newspaper reporters. The story gripped the world. On Thursday, I heard one of the many executives involved, Tony Hall, trying to explain himself, having apparently banned James Naughtie from interviewing him. After the overplaying of the Diana story, the BBC seemed again to have lost its senses. The scene was worthy of a Taleban putsch or a student prank. Mr Hall mumbled incomprehensibly, as if with a gun at his neck. The rebels spoke darkly of the independent integrity of the *Today* programme, allegedly threatened by satanic forces within the BBC.

Those of us who hover professionally on the fringe of these volcanoes must discount much that we hear in the corridors. One thing is clear. There are now two BBCs, and they are at daggers drawn. The

first is composed of those who broadcast. They are fiercely parochial, introverted, competitive with each other and commercial broadcasting. Some are good, some bad, some indifferent. They spend money as if the taxpayer's pocket was their own. But I know what they do. They broadcast.

The second BBC has no link with the first except at parties. It has the Leninist title of Corporate Centre and comprises an overhead vaster than that of any media group I know. It is more bureaucratic than any British institution outside the Ministry of Defence. (Students may compare and contrast the forest of BBC office blocks sprouting at White City with the MoD's similar forest outside Bath.) Corporate Centre is impervious to cuts or criticism and eats, often literally, £55 million a year.

Many "good friends" work there and will not thank me for saying so, but I have not the foggiest idea what they do all day. They "go to meetings" and fight each other. Few would last five minutes in the private sector, yet all claim private-sector salaries.

Those who have escaped this miasma tell tales of interminable conferences, indecisive meetings, labyrinthine reporting lines and private staffs as big as those of Cabinet Ministers. Like a prize patient in a teaching hospital, Corporate Centre seems to suffer every malady known to business science. On display is not just Parkinson's first law, but all his other ones: the law of the rising pyramid, the coefficient of inefficiency, the curse of the administration block, the law of delay, the law of proliferating deputies. The place is afflicted with the defensiveness of overbig organisations. This surfaces in the ubiquitous "BBC speech", a tedious catalogue of achievements supplied to executives for use at seminars and culminating in the Ian McIntyre joke about how not to miss a BBC meeting. Andrew Davis found himself stumbling through fragments of the speech at the recent Last Night Of The Proms.

I never encountered institutional venom like that of the broadcasting BBC towards the Corporate Centre. Last week's eruption by Jeremy Paxman, James Naughtie, John Humphrys, Anna Ford and others



was not the normal distaste of any profession for its bosses. Mr Birt, personally an amiable man, is treated by his underlings with what I can only call hatred. I would have feared for his safety had he shown his face in the surviving studios at Broadcasting House last week. I can see why he is banishing them to the wastes of White City.

What Mr Birt is struggling to do with BBC news is to be right in theory. I love broadcast news and am fed up with getting it only when the BBC deigns to make its "resources" available between sport and features. I get a better service from Sky News and ITN's News Direct. They give me information when I want it, not when it suits a programming committee. Two decades after 24-hour news has come to America and commercial radio to Britain, the world's most extensive and expensive news gatherer, the BBC, still does not offer a round-the-clock serious news service on screen and radio. It does not even offer a light classical music channel. Mr Birt has been wanting to change this for years. In fact, why are we waiting?

If the price of a modern news service is bruised egos, too bad. I could hardly believe it, when the news staff treated their reshuffle as a headline story. Would they give the same publicity to such changes

in the health service or local government? What to outsiders are the hard knocks of corporate bureaucracy are a threat to freedom when they happen to a Paxman, a Naughtie or a Ford. Having thus usurped the airwaves for their personal moan, they complained that the BBC was "infringing the independent integrity" — of another bit of the BBC. Really.

Yet no sooner had I blinked than stout party collapsed. No sooner had the Corporate Centre made a real decision (albeit the unimpeachable John Tusa cleared his throat and the bureaucrats retreated. We saw that classic symptom of bureaucratic malfunction: senior executives were overruled by higher executives, themselves under pressure from stratospheric executives. All professed that they "had not known what was going on". They had clearly been at the wrong meeting. I was left with a nasty thought. Does nobody at the BBC ever get fired?

You do not fire great British institutions — and perhaps it is as well. Digital broadcasting may shatter the BBC's complacency, slash its market share and send chunks of its activity spinning off into oblivion. The exile of all real

broadcasting to White City, leaving only Corporate Centre in Broadcasting House, is presumably a prelude to eventual privatisation. One day BBC television and radio channels will come under self-governing trusts, taking subscriptions or advertising. They will have to fend for themselves, financially.

What then for "the corporation", and its £55 million overhead? Let us be soft-hearted. I would be sorry to see it go. It is a bad manager but a good regulator. The BBC is also the constitutional monarch of British broadcasting. It is Royal Family and Court to the great and good. They rely on its hospitality, its dignity. Public life is enhanced by its presence, and vastly entertained by its rows. We need such proxies.

Yet £50 million of public money will mean a tough deal. A pound a head from every Briton says that the corporation must not change its spurs. Broadcasting House must stay regal, a memorial to old-fashioned management, to interminable meetings, arrogant consultants, fat-cat salaries, perks and rows. The BBC has become part of the pageantry of corporate Britain. It offers a mirror of its failings, a real-time case-history of institutional conflict. It makes every other organisation feel better every day. For that pleasure we should pay.

Hair today...

IT IS some years since Sir Edward Heath asked a pertinent question in the House. So news of the former Prime Minister's most recent query has been exercising MPs.

In a Commons corridor recently, he noticed the modest form of Michael Fabricant, Conservative

MP for Lichfield. Now Mr Fabricant is that rare creature on the Opposition benches: an admirer of Sir Edward.

The former PM squinted, pondered and asked: "Are you Michael Fabricant?" The backbencher puffed out his chest and consented



"There was an Englishman, a Welshman and a Scotsman — and they started talking about devolution"

with deference and alacrity. "Do you wear a wig?" Heath demanded. Cue: shake of those famous shoulders, accompanied by the customary Heath laugh. And well might Heath wonder. Indeed, many of his colleagues have been pondering the same question, but they had just been too polite to ask.

Sadly, Mr Fabricant's response is not recorded. But of this we can be sure: the MP sports a luxurious blond mane; yet photographs of Fabricant taken some years earlier show him, in the parlance of today, follically challenged. Who says Sir Edward should retire?

Hezza's ghost

TARZAN will not be swinging to Wee William Hague's rescue. Michael Heseltine, the star turn at Tory conferences for more than two decades, has decided to stay away from this year's gloomy post mortem in Blackpool.

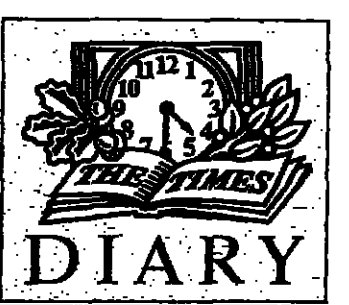
The former Deputy Prime Minister has told colleagues that he does not want to be "the ghost at the feast". Hague is disappointed, and some senior Conservatives are quietly blaming Anne — Mrs Hezza — for encouraging him to spend more time in his arborescent.

She has worried about his health since he had a heart attack in Venice in 1993. Even then, he recovered to perform podium exercises at the following gathering, and last year won the contest for the loudest applause (94 decibels) and the longest (four minutes, 20 seconds).

WHAT is it about the People's Party and Tuscany? There was Mr Blair's treasured adviser, Roger Liddle, waddling through a piazza in Siena one balmy evening, when who should he bump into but Peter



George Best: wine merchant



Hyman, another Blair confidant — just an olive's throw from their master's occasional country castle.

Vintage Best

IT IS like presenting the Pink Panther with an open sale. George Best is to buy a wine merchant.

The former Manchester United footballer, who always combined business with pleasure, has bought shares in Alimentari, a West London off-licence. Its shelves heave with more than 100 varieties of wine — but for how long?

NOT only do Tories struggle to accept defeat, but Labour does not seem to realise it has won. With 23,000 applying to come to its con-

ference, party HQ is so confused that it has sent passes to members of "the Shadow Cabinet".

Busted

ROBIN COOK is growing very exercised about a large bust. As soon as he became Foreign Secretary, he installed a marble likeness of his great Labour hero, Ernest Bevin, in his Whitehall study.

This, he felt, would smack less of colonialism than Malcolm Rifkind's artistic legacy — an imposing portrait of Palmerston and an equally imperial, gilt-edged oil of a fine Indian princeling.

But upon entering his office this week, Mr Cook found that the bust had gone. "Who's taken Ernest?" he demanded. Possible culprits are being quizzed, with little progress. And Mr Cook actually thought he could change the Foreign Office...

Jungle fever

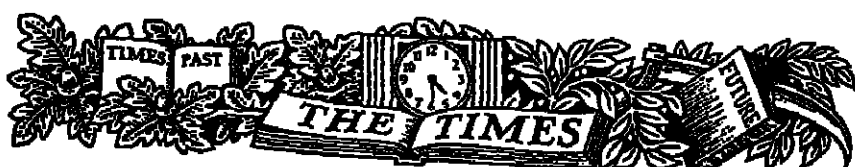
THE grim cries of dying men are haunting the appealing actress, Jane Seymour. She was struck down with jungle fever while filming *The Swiss Family Robinson* in Puerto Rico last month.



Jane Seymour: hallucinations

"I got hallucinations of World War One soldiers fighting in the trenches," she recalls. "I couldn't move from the foetal position. It felt as if my bones were crushed and my head was exploding." Happily, pater was on hand to ease her tortured head. "These black and white images formed the face of my father which then turned into colour and he was right there in front of me," she says. Sounds as if she might be safer going back to appearing in James Bond films.

P.H.S.



LESSON FROM LLANELLI

Wales has set a challenge for both party leaders

Wales was offered an imperfect assembly and it has given an imperfect answer which will satisfy neither constitutional reformers nor Conservatives. The Government could not have held the referendum at a more propitious time. After 18 years of Tory rule marked by gubernatorial arrogance, after the election of a Prime Minister whose popularity is still at record levels, and after Scotland had voted so decisively for devolution, only just over a quarter of the Welsh said "yes" to Tony Blair's assembly. That was, however, a majority on the night and Mr Blair has his mandate — just.

The coming passage of constitutional legislation through the Commons would always have been a test for both Labour and Tory leaders. The nature of the Welsh result, a slim majority for significant change, makes it all the more testing. Mr Hague will feel emboldened to oppose but he must not obstruct; he should seek now to make an assembly as effective as possible, in the interests of maintaining the Union which his party exists to defend.

Mr Blair has an even more ticklish task. He promised yesterday to take note of the nature of his mandate and work harder to bring all of Wales with him as he proceeds with reform. The nature of the mandate shows, however, just how difficult it is to satisfy all of Wales. The result starkly laid bare the divisions that exist within the Principality. Even the Cymric north and the Anglophone south were divided against themselves. Wrexham said no to devolution because it did not want to be run from distant Cardiff and then Cardiff said no too.

Ministers were already aware of the need to respect Wales's diversity and sought to reflect that in the framing of their White Paper and the conduct of their campaign. The proposal to elect the assembly by proportional representation was designed to prevent any one party, or region, dominating

the new body. Labour's commitment to selecting candidates of the highest quality for the new body was intended to allay concerns that the cronyism of Valleys local politics would be replicated in the assembly. These commitments were not, on their own, enough to secure support for an assembly outside Labour's heartlands and nationalist strongholds. Labour must consult outside its own ranks and listen humbly to other political traditions if it is to create an assembly which all Wales can learn to love.

Humility, rather than hubris, should also inform Labour's approach to other constitutional questions. The nature of the Welsh result should cause English campaigners for regional assemblies to think again. Whatever its internal divisions, Wales has a political and cultural identity altogether more pronounced and separate than any recognisable English region. If support is so low for a Welsh assembly, at this stage in the Government's honeymoon, is it politically wise to prepare the ground for the East Midlands to embrace autonomy in future?

English federalism should not be the only constitutional casualty of the result. It should provide a better brake on European federalism. Labour is committed to testing public opinion, either in a referendum or general election, before entering a single currency. The Welsh result shows that a general election victory, however sweeping, cannot be interpreted as a mandate for major constitutional change. Labour won 30 out of 36 seats in Wales just four months ago, and the other 6 seats went to parties even keener on devolution: yet when the people were consulted on the specific question the result was altogether less decisive. That is the final lesson from Llanelli for ministers. If they want to ensure public assent for a change as momentous as entry to EMU, then a referendum is the only honest way of divining the voters' views.

BEIJING'S BIG RISK

China now enters the most delicate stage of economic reform

China's 15th Communist Party Congress ended yesterday with a stiff march by seven smiling men, clapping in unison, to prearranged positions on the stage of power. The ritual presentation of the new all-powerful standing committee of China's Politburo is unchanged since Mao Zedong. Now, as in his heyday, the bargaining that went into their selection and ranking can only be guessed at. The opacity of China's political processes contrasts starkly with the dizzying speed of its economic transformation, the recovery of some cultural freedoms and the spread of individual opportunity. Wooden words obscure, as they are intended to, the tense internal debate about how best the Communist Party can tame the hydra of social change and retain control.

President Jiang Zemin, China's "core leader" who comes out of this five-yearly congress with his position strengthened but not unchallenged, has hedged his bets. With the ousting of Qiao Shi, formerly third in the hierarchy and now shunted totally off-stage, he has declared for political conservatism against the party's narrowly more liberal wing. Every party congress creates expectations; Mr Jiang has put China on notice that neither political reform nor a softening of the official verdict on Tiananmen should be counted among them. Conversely, the promotion of Zhu Rongji, China's reformist economic supremo, puts him firmly in line to succeed Li Peng, the unpopular Prime Minister, who must step down next year.

On Mr Zhu's shoulders will therefore fall the risky but indispensable next step on China's march to the world marketplace — the dismantling of Mao's most intractable creation, the 305,000 "iron ricebowls" on which around 100 million Chinese workers depend from cradle to school to grave. These inefficient loss-makers cost China a fortune in government subsidy and bad debt to its biggest state banks worth a fifth of their total

lending, and have drained yet more cash from the economy by accumulating £80 billion worth of debts to each other.

The costs are rising monthly and China's economic miracle will falter, with unpredictable consequences, if money goes on vanishing down these black holes. But there is no painless way out. Ideologically, Mr Jiang has steered a tricky course, declaring that the transfer of companies to "the public" leaves "public ownership" intact.

The Government remains torn between economic necessity and ideological conservatism. While it seems ready to let 100,000 or so smaller units sink or swim in the marketplace, it insists that 3,000 of the largest "strategic" enterprises will stay firmly in state hands. Recently, as provincial bosses began to take matters into their own hands, Mr Zhu formed a task force to "Stop the Drain of State Assets".

There are, however, two powerful arguments for starting small even though it is the largest enterprises that are the heaviest drain on China's coffers. In the absence of secure property rights, mass privatisation could well go hand in hand with massive corruption and asset-stripping. In addition, if the real behemoths were forced either to pay their way or close, another 40 million city dwellers could rapidly be added to the army of 175 million redundant rural workers already roaming China in search of jobs. Until these workers found other, more productive employment, the absence of safety nets could give rise to explosive outbursts of social unrest.

To secure China's future, its leaders need to shrink the state. But the process, as the World Bank's generally upbeat China survey observed this week, "will stretch China's social fabric to the limit". Given the high stakes and difficulty of the gamble ahead, it is not hard to understand why China's new team failed to crack a smile yesterday.

THE REIGN IN SPAIN

England should also remember its Philip

Spain is preparing elaborate events next year to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of King Philip II. In Madrid, it will be as much celebration as commemoration. The Spanish see Philip as a heroic light, as a dynamic king who, in the 16th century, personified the power, prestige and prosperity of the then vast Spanish empire — which would disappear within a few decades of his departure.

In Britain, the hostility between Philip's Spain and Elizabeth's England has been reflected in the tone of our history. Almost every aspect of Philip's personality and policies has been subject to periodic vilification. He has been characterised as a humourless bore, an insecure depressive and a religious zealot whose fanaticism fanned the Inquisition. His treatment of the Dutch and Turks abroad, and the Jews and Muslims at home, have all contributed to an overwhelmingly negative image.

But there is more to the connections between Philip and these islands than an unsuccessful Armada. For four years he took the title — although was never crowned — of King of England. In theory his marriage to Mary Tudor made him little more than her consort. In practice, his superstar status as the Habsburg heir, and the rarity of a woman ruler here, ensured him an influence far

beyond the formal. Had Mary's phantom pregnancy of 1555 actually produced a son, the course of English history would have been dramatically altered.

Neither the House of Commons nor the country ever liked the marriage. Fears that Catholic Spain would eventually absorb England loomed large at every level. But Philip did little himself to legitimise those suspicions. His foreign policy may have forced England into needless war with France and the loss of Calais. But it was Mary, rather than her husband, who was determined to restore Roman Catholicism without compromising to English sensibilities. Most of the trials and executions that would eventually serve the Protestant cause occurred while Philip was abroad in the Netherlands. It was the Queen who so often sought to exclude Elizabeth from the succession. Philip, at that time, made no attempt to block her from the throne.

A more balanced account of the King does not demand wholesale reassessment. Much of the criticism of his reign in Spain retains credibility. Whether his relatively benign approach towards England would have lasted if Mary had lived longer is a matter of conjecture. Yet 400 years on, the title he once bore should entitle Philip's life and legacy to receive at least a little memory here.

Challenge to Tory reform plans

From Mr Alan Clark, MP for Kensington and Chelsea (Conservative)

Sir, The Conservative Party finds itself in a position of some difficulty. The membership have been issued with a ballot paper which, under the guise of asking one question, actually asks two: "Do you endorse William Hague as leader of the Conservative Party and support the principles of reform which he has outlined?"

These questions are entirely separate, but the same answer ("yes" or "no") is required to cover both.

I have little doubt that the majority are ready and willing to "endorse" William Hague as leader, and wish him well. And certainly it is true that the entire party structure needs overhaul, with real participation and responsibility delegated to the voluntary sector.

But the six "principles of reform", although impeccable in themselves, are capable of highly subjective interpretation. The ultimate aim (as reported in *The Times* on September 7) is "the merging of MPs, Central Office and the voluntary party into one single structure", subordinate to a governing body at whose head sits the leader.

William Hague is telling invited groups of activists: "People can either support the changes and me; or they don't get either". So the whole Conservative Party is being told, ahead of any detailed debate, to confer a blank cheque on a small coterie of management consultants to proceed as they think fit.

Such a request, even were it coming from a leader with a distinguished record of achievement in the past, does not sit comfortably in our history. Certainly, for example, had the restricted autonomy of associations or the power to impose deselection by edict from the centre been available in the Thirties it would, at different points in their career, have been deployed against three of our future Prime Ministers — Macmillan, Eden and Churchill.

I appreciate that any leader of a democratic party must envy Tony Blair and the total authority he has acquired over his own members. But we should note that this change was essential to the Labour Party in order to compel abandonment of its traditional beliefs and inspiration.

There are many who might agree that for the Conservatives it is necessary, not to move further away from our traditional standpoint, but to return to it.

Yours, ALAN CLARK, Salwood, Kent CT21 4QU, September 19.

Mandate for change?

From Mr R. O. Stonehouse

Sir, The referendum results in Wales, where only about a quarter of the electorate voted for a vital change to the constitution of Great Britain, and in Scotland, where only about 45 per cent voted affirmatively, raise serious questions about whether our unwritten constitution, based on a mixture of convention and statute law, is adequate or indeed democratic. The proportion of the electorate of Great Britain who would have voted for the proposed changes is unknown.

With such a poor and incomplete mandate for change the Government is given the go-ahead to introduce Bills which it will expect with its large majority, to convert with little difficulty into Acts of Parliament that will change the constitution.

In Wales, 11 out of 22 areas voted to remain solely under the authority of the Westminster Parliament. Will the Bill on Welsh devolution take this into account and give them the option of opting out?

On the ground of stability, should the constitution be made more difficult to change than ordinary laws? For example, should changes have to have the support of two thirds of the electorate in a referendum and a two-thirds majority in the House, as opposed to straight majorities?

Secondly, has the time come to make voting compulsory?

Yours faithfully, R. O. STONEHOUSE, 14 Claddagh Kirkbost, Lochmaddy, North Uist, Western Isles, September 19.

From Sir Wyn Roberts

Sir, Mr Sion Cowell's letter (September 18) could give the incorrect impression that I supported the "yes" campaign in the Welsh referendum. In fact, I voted "no", on the grounds that the White Paper proposals for government by all-party subject committees are a prescription for indecision and chaos.

Imagine the UK being governed by such committees drawn from all parties in the House of Commons. Nothing would ever be done. A Cabinet-style arrangement is infinitely preferable. At least, it works.

Yours sincerely, WYN ROBERTS, Tan-y-Gwalia, Rowen, Conwy, Gwynedd, September 18.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

League table of military leaders comes under fire

From Mr Neil Danson

Sir, The hundred most influential military leaders (report, September 15; letters, September 17) is a silly-season game, the sillier with a first rule that makes the United States the ultimate of civilisation.

But if the game is to be played, and with this rule, Lieutenant-Colonel Lanning's list displays the army man's abiding ignorance of the role of naval warfare.

Sir Francis Drake (not listed) formulated the doctrine that England's borders are the coastlines of her enemies. It was the practical application of this doctrine, by Drake and his successors, that ensured that North America was predominantly colonised by English-speaking people, and that its political development was in an English tradition. No Francis Drake, no George Washington, no United States.

Colonel Lanning has clearly not read carefully enough *The Influence of Sea Power on History* by Alfred T. Mahan (no 38).

Yours faithfully, NEIL DATSON, Glebe Farm, Spelsbury, Oxfordshire, September 16.

From Mr Paddy Heazell

Sir, I fancy that Field Marshal Montgomery (no 63) would have scarcely been mollified at finding himself 16 places above his rival, Rommel. His response to being 49 places below Hitler, who spent much of the Second World War providing highly dubious military leadership, can only be guessed.

Monty, with uncharacteristic modesty, once suggested that the three greatest commanders of history were Napoleon (2), Alexander (3) and Moses (not placed).

Indeed, the scope for questioning Lanning's judgment is limitless. Saddam Hussein (81) rated above Charles XII (97) or Ney (96). Indeed, a list of the most disastrous military leaders would be illuminating and

well might include several names on Lanning's list.

Yours etc, PADDY HEAZELL, The Drift, Snape, Saxmundham, Suffolk, September 16.

From Mr C. G. S. Clayton

Sir, More than a few of the leaders named by Colonel Lanning were notable failures.

Joan of Arc (43), for instance, who merely had the good fortune to catch the English temporarily off their guard, and was cruelly punished the moment they recovered; and Richard Lionheart (58), who managed to bring his people from one of the highest moments in their history to their greatest humiliation. One can only wonder how he came to omit the great General Custer.

One longs to list some of the omissions, notably those from the ancient world such as Miltiades, Epaminondas, Philip of Macedon, Sulla, Constantine and Belisarius, all of whom stood like colossi over the times in which they lived.

Yours faithfully, C. G. S. CLAYTON, Davian, Main Road, Foxdale, Isle of Man, September 15.

From Mr Bernard Cunningham

Sir, In listing General Robert E. Lee (60) so low, Colonel Lanning has erred in his declared purpose of including leaders "who had dominated their times ... and had exerted profound influence on the future".

If it had not been for General Lee's great leadership, the American Civil War would not have lasted four years, causing havoc to the Western world's trade. His skill as a strategist has been an inspiration and model for subsequent military leaders. His humanity lent an acceptable face to what many considered to be an unworthy cause.

Had he chosen the Union rather than his beloved Virginia, he most certainly would have replaced Ulysses

Simpson Grant at number 33. Thus is the price of defeat assessed.

Yours truly, BERNARD CUNNINGHAM, Dr Fleming 30-7-C, 28036 Madrid, September 16.

From Sir David Hunt

Sir, Your leading article, "Some talk of Alexander" (September 15), made me think of Field Marshal Alexander of Tunis (78). He should be higher on the list of great commanders which you were discussing.

Three Prime Ministers whom I served, Attlee, Churchill and Macmillan, had no hesitation of rating him the outstanding Allied general of the Second World War. Bradley (46), that excellent American general, was of the same opinion, declaring that all Alexander's American fellow generals regarded him with "adulation".

Yours sincerely, DAVID HUNT, Old Place, Lindfield, Sussex, September 16.

From Mr John Billington

Sir, One notable omission from Colonel Lanning's list is the formidable figure of Songtsen Gampo, Emperor of Tibet in the 7th century.

Songtsen Gampo united the tribes of central Asia from Mongolia to Nepal, and from Swat and Samarkand to Burma and Siam (then capital of China) where his descendants a century later briefly deposed the Chinese Emperor and caused such fear that Harun ar-Rashid of Baghdad was obliged to form an alliance with the Chinese to contain them.

Songtsen Gampo was a man of culture also and introduced writing and Buddhism to Tibet as well as laying down precepts for moral conduct which are still highly regarded by Tibetans today.

Yours sincerely, JOHN BILLINGTON (Chairman, Tibet Society of UK, 1993-97), Brook House, Llandysil, Montgomery, Powys.

Prescription for healthy drinking

From Dr P. Abraham, FRCPsych

Sir, Dr Stuttaford, in his four-part series on alcohol (September 13-17), extols the health-giving merits of wine while counselling against overindulgence. The "Prescription" of two to four glasses of claret daily, with meals (illustrating the first article), carries a real risk that a conscientious male "patient" might stick carefully to four, even of the rather parsimonious 125ml "pub" glasses. He would then consume 42 units in a week.

A more modest female choice of two of the generous 175ml glasses served in some wine bars would score 30 units in a week. Either, supplementing their "Prescription" with an occasional aperitif, would be taking chances with their health, and both, though feeling themselves in full control of a vehicle, would be in serious jeopardy on the road. Would not one or two glasses be wiser?

Yours faithfully, P. ABRAHAM, (Executive Director), The Medical Council on Alcoholism, 3 St Andrew's Place, NW1, September 17.

From Mr Brian Robertson

Sir, From reading Dr Stuttaford's articles over a long period I have the impression that his medical practice in London has a fair proportion of rich and self-indulgent men who regularly imbibe expensive wines and lead affluent or even extravagant lives. Such people, as is known from medical studies, live longer than those less privileged or the abstemious, because they want for nothing and invariably have access to the best standards of healthcare.

Crystal Palace plans

From Mr Eric Kings

Sir, Mr Philip Kolvin's letter (September 13) raises an interesting conflict of opinion about the proposal for a new Crystal Palace.

Some people object to the modern design, with its novel use of glass — that is to be expected with any radical design approach to a development on a well-known site; but there are also those who find Ian Ritchie's design both challenging and interesting.

Most objectors, however, have fastened on the current ideas for the use of the building when completed. The design lends itself to a number of possible uses, just as the old Crystal Palace did. Like it or not, to be financially viable the uses will have to coincide with what the public want; a cinema facility is presumably among them.

There are also many — like Mr Matthew Frith, whose letter you print with Mr Kolvin's — who want no building at all. Mr Frith's point about open space is addressed by the provision of unobtrusive roof car-parking.

The proposal before the Secretary of State for the Environment is the best I have seen in recent years. It is a pity that Sir Joseph Paxton, designer of the original Palace, is unavailable for comment.

Yours faithfully, ERIC KINGS, 47 Ross Road, South Norwood, SE25, September 14.

Studies quoted by the good doctor do not mention that the populations used in his book could be separated by lifestyle as much as by alcohol intake. There are young wine drinkers on the streets of this city, for example, who look as if they will not last the week.

Yours faithfully, B. ROBERTSON, 87 AUDLEY PARK ROAD, Bath.

From His Honour Peter Mason, QC

Sir, Dr Thomas Stuttaford (Weekend, September 13) describes how his elderly aunt, after drinking burgundy at dinner, whispered to him that she could no longer stand, and asked him to "make the necessary arrangements". What, I keep wondering, could these have been?

Did the lady spend the night at table wrapped in a blanket? Was a wheelchair brought in from the woodshed? Did a task force of servants carry her to bed? Or perhaps the doctor had a potion on hand to restore her balance? The answer might be of practical use to many of your readers, including myself.

Yours faithfully, PETER MASON, Lane Cottage, Amberley, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

From the Reverend P. L. Hughes

Sir, Is it possible I could be harmed by over-exposure to the views, opinions and observations of the good Dr Tom Stuttaford?

Yours sincerely, PETER HUGHES, 11 Worthington Fold, Atherton, Manchester, September 15.

'Candle' tax

From Mr Roger Pursall

Sir, The Chancellor said that the Government was giving up its claim to VAT on the sales of *Candle in the Wind* because "that is in line with what the public would want" (report, September 11; letter, September 17).

While he is in this mood, should we be sending him a list of other ways in which we would like our taxes to be spent?

Yours faithfully, ROGER PURSALL, 32 Sovereign Way, Moseley, Birmingham, roger.p@virgin.net, September 17.

Floating currency

From Mr John F. Acheson

Sir, The new 50p piece reminds me vividly of my childhood days in Germany during the Weimar Republic in the 1920s when, if you did not hold on tightly to your 10 mark coin, it would gently float away.

I am, Sir, yours obediently, JOHN ACHESON, Blackthorn Cottage, Highfield Road, West Byfleet, Surrey, September 18.

Weekend Money letters, page 43

Ask a silly question ...

From Mr Nicholas Stockdale

Sir, I recall the experience of an acquaintance of mine at a rather prestigious City law firm. To assess his suitability for the position of "trainee solicitor" he was asked that most incisive of interview questions (letters, September 1, 10, 16): "What are your weaknesses?" After a moment's reflection, he ventured: "Blondes."

The interview concluded some two minutes later.

Yours faithfully, NICHOLAS STOCKDALE, 362 Fulham Palace Road, SW6, September 17.

From Mr Paul Gilbert

Sir, Some years ago my then employer interviewed a young man for a job. The applicant stood up in the middle of the interview to look out of the window. Apparently he was a "bus spotter" and had just seen a bus going along the high street which shouldn't have been on that particular route.

It was of great concern to him and he commented accordingly. He didn't get the job.

Yours faithfully, PAUL GILBERT, 26 Highfield Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, m0k@enterprisenet, September 10.

From Mr F. G. R. Fisher

Sir, When I was being interviewed for the headmastership of Bryanston in 1959, Sir Piers Debenham, Bt, asked for my views on foxhunting. I said that in principle I was opposed to it but that I had no experience of the sport either as a hunter or as a fox. I got the job.

Yours faithfully, ROBSON FISHER, Craig Cottage, Lower Street, Dittisham, nr Dartmouth, Devon, September 15.

From Mrs J. Shrimpton

Sir, The honest response to a silly question should, I believe, be encouraged from an early age.

The primary school at which I am a governor decided to make their examination questions more "user friendly". A general knowledge paper was set for the nine-year-old class. The first question was: "Do you know who lives at No 10 Downing Street?"

Of the 30 children, 28 wrote down "Yes", the other two wrote "No".

I am, yours faithfully, JUDITH A. SHRIMPTON, The Old Farmhouse, Lucton, Leominster, Herefordshire, September 16.

From Mr John Condon

Sir, During a Civil Service interview in 1974 I was asked for my thoughts on (i) the reasons for the recent Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus, and (ii) the future of Britain's railways.

I was subsequently offered a post as clerical assistant at the local artificial-limb centre.

Yours faithfully, JOHN CONDON, 8 Leamington Avenue, West Didsbury, Manchester, September 10.

September 19: The Duke of Gloucester, Grand Prior, the Order of St John, this morning received the Lord Prior of the Order (the Lord Vestey) and the Chancellor of the Order (Professor Anthony Mellows).
YORK HOUSE
ST JAMES'S PALACE
September 19: The Duke of Kent this evening attended a Concert by the Prussia Cove Group at Prussia Cove, Penzance, Cornwall.

Weekend

TODAY:
Lund Berkeley, 58: Mr John Dankworth, jazz musician. 70: Sir Geoffrey Dear, former HM Inspector of Constabulary.

Lady Graffhey-Smith, of Barking, Ipswich, left estate valued at £122,899 net.

TODAY:
Lord Berkeley, 58: Mr John Dankworth, jazz musician. 70: Sir Geoffrey Dear, former HM Inspector of Constabulary.

Conran, writer, 65; Mr William Dacre, banker, 63; Miss Mary Fetherston-Dale, former matron-in-chief, QARNS, 79; Commandant Marjorie Helen (Kelsey) Fletcher, former director, WRNS, 64; Mrs Lorna Hogg, 64; Professor J.M. Ham, electrical engineer, 71; Mr John Hoddinott, Chief Constable, Hampshire, 53; Sir Colin Imray, former diplomat, 40; Lord Ironside, 73; Professor Sir Hugh Lloyd Jones, FBA, Emeritus Professor, Oxford, 64; Sir John Lunn, University, 75; Sir Ian MacGregor, former chairman, National Coal Board, 85; Sir Peter Matthews, company director, 75; Mr Simon Mayn, broadcaster, 39; Mr Anthony Millard, Headmaster, Giggleswick School, 59; Mr Bill Morris, secretary, 64; Mr Peter Smith, former deputy commissioner, Metropolitan Police, 59; Sir Brian Unwin, president and chairman of the board, European Investment Bank, 62; Professor Bernard Williams, FBA, philosophy, 64; Jimmy Young, broadcaster, 74.

presided. Among those present were:
Lord Lane of Horsell, the Masters of the Butchers', Founders', Farmers', and Chartered Secretaries and Administrators' Companies, the Deputy Master of the Fleethers' Company, the Master of the Charterhouse, the Archdeacon of Oxford and Mr Alan Keat.

presided. Among those present were:

Lord Lane of Hovehill, the Masters of the Society of Founders, Partners' Farmers' and Chartered Securities and Administrators' Companies, the Deputy Master of the Fleethers' Society, the Master of the Charterhouse, the Archdeacon of Oxford and Mr Alan Keat.

Department of Geological sciences, University of Durham,
Fractures and permeability evolution in crystalline rocks
P G Hepper, Professor of Petrology, Queen's University of Belfast.
The arena: the development of behavioural ecology
A. B. Kruuk, Graduate in Molecular Biology, University of Glasgow,
Mural painting in Scotland post 1940
N Wrigley, Professor of Geography, University of Southampton,
The post-LBO reconfiguration of US food retailing
G K H Zupane, Lecturer in Inter-Active Design, Brunel University of Uxbridge,
J. Stoyanov, Space charge wave materials in photo-refractive wave
M Spino, Electrical engineer in wood, film, nanoparticle transport in materials
C H Sieck, Cera based electrolytic understanding and optimising performance, Eutecum ceramic

Mr N. Punwani
and **Miss K. Weidmann**
The marriage took place on Saturday, September 6, at Exeter College Chapel, Oxford, between

College Chapel, Oxford, between Mr Neil Punwani, only son of Mr and Mrs Gul C. Punwani, of Ealing, London, and Miss Katherine Weidmann, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Eric J. Weidmann, of New Malden, Surrey. Father Peter Newby officiated.

Mr N.J.D. Rena
and Miss R.E. Brnoughton

DEATHS: virgin. Roman poet.
Brundisium (Brindisi), 14 BC;
King Edward II, reigned 1307-27,
murdered, Berkeley Castle,
Gloucestershire, 1327; Girolamo
Cardin, mathematician and phy-
sician, Rome, 1576; Sir Walter
Scott, novelist and poet, Abbots-
ford, Borders, 1832; Lord George

In his first pronouncement from the throne he told the nation that his grandfather "gave birth to the Swedish people."

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No one who loves money can ever have enough, and no one who loves wealth enjoys any return from it. This too is futile. Ecclesiastes 5: 10

ANNIVERSARIES

LEACH - On September 14th, 1977 to Nina (née Donaldson) and John, a beautiful daughter, Olivia Mary, a sister for Sam.

WELSH - On September 14th, 1977 to Nina (née Donaldson) and John, a beautiful daughter, Olivia Mary, a sister for Sam.

KIRCHEN SMITH-WELLS - On 20th September 1947 at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Michael and Rachel Mary at

service at Church, Thursday 25 11.15am cremation. please, don't forget the

ANNIVERSARIES

KIRCHEN SMITH-WILLIAMS - On 20th September 1947 at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Michael and Rachel Mary

service at St Hillary's Church, Llanrhos on Thursday 25th September at 11.15am followed by cremation. No flowers please, donations may be sent to the ENIL Fund for

Church, Warren Road, Romk. at 11am on Thursday 25th September followed by interment at the Brookwood Cemetery, Woking. Family flowers only, donations in lieu of flowers would be appreciated.

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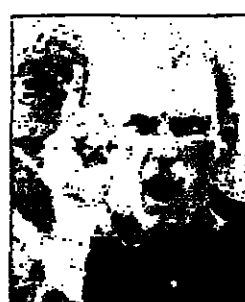
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20 1997



Richard Handover, who joined the company in 1965 and is seen by some as died-in-the-wool WH Smith man, believes the chain can be revived

WH Smith picks company veteran as chief executive

By PAUL DURMAN

WH SMITH yesterday appointed a company veteran of 32 years' standing as its new chief executive, dis-appointing many in the City who had hoped the under-performing retailer would bring in some fresh blood to turn the group around.

Richard Handover, 51, succeeds Bill Cockburn, who wiped £100 million off Smith's stock market value in June when he walked out in favour of a senior job with British Telecom. Mr Handover is currently managing director

of Smith's news distribution business, but he has worked in many parts of the group since joining in 1965. Smith's critics believe a newcomer would have found it easier to take the tough decisions they believe are necessary to improve performance, particularly at the main high street chain. Some observers favour a break-up of the group, which also includes the Waterstone's book shops and the Virgin Our Price music chain. Smith's shares slipped 6½p to 368p.

A leading shareholder said: "It's a bit disappointing. We are wondering whether Cockburn found it all a bit too difficult and now [the board] find it a bit too difficult and they put this guy in. It would be very unfair for me to say he's not up to it, but the suspicion is that he's not."

One analyst said: "The biggest problem is he's a died-in-the-wool WH Smith man. This inward looking culture is partly what's wrong with Smith. This group needs to change." However, one large shareholder who had met Mr Handover was impressed: "He's a retailer. That's what they need. We felt he looked as if he might just do it."

Jeremy Hardie, Smith's chairman, said the company had not wanted a chief executive who would embark on another wide-ranging review to consider whether it should sell any of its businesses. He added: "I would not have appointed somebody who from the start said: 'I am going to come in and turn the whole thing upside down.'" He did not intend to shackle the chief executive, because it was his job to decide what should happen.

Mr Handover said the defeated internal candidates for the top job — Alan Giles of Waterstone's and John Hancock of Smith's US business, and also Keith Hamill, finance director — were all committed to working with Mr Handover. Mr Handover said his role would be to support Beverley Hodson, who has recently taken over as managing director of WH Smith Retail. The group believes the chain can be revived by applying basic retail skills.

Smith would not disclose how much Mr Handover will earn. Mr Cockburn was paid £425,000.

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES
FTSE 100 5022.8 (-22.4)
Yield 3.22%
FTSE All share 2362.31 (-7.88)
Nikkei 18059.21 (+128.12)
New York 7889.52 (-33.20)
S&P Composite 947.18 (-0.11)

US RATE
Federal Funds 5¼% (5¼%)
Long Bond 8½% (8½%)
Yield 6.41% (6.40%)

LONDON MONEY
3-month interbank 7½% (7½%)
Life long gilt 117½ (117½)
Future (Dec) 117½ (117½)

STERLING
New York 1.6110* (1.6115)
London 1.8082 (1.8181)
DM 2.8504 (2.8518)
FF 5.5752 (5.5124)
SF 2.3454 (2.3591)
Yen 121.95* (121.95)
£ Index 100.2 (100.6)

US DOLLAR
London 1.7725* (1.7795)
DM 5.9510* (5.9510)
FF 1.4591* (1.4680)
SF 121.95* (121.95)
Yen 105.7 (105.7)

Tokyo close Yen 121.86

NORTH SEA OIL
Brent 15-day (Dec) \$18.55 (\$18.40)

GOLD
London close \$322.45 (\$320.85)
* denotes midday trading price

Laura Ashley puts consultant in job

By JASON NISSE

ANN IVERSON, the embattled chief executive of Laura Ashley, has turned to a management consultant with links to Guinness during the Ernest Saunders era to help to sort out production problems at the troubled clothes and furnishings retailer.

David Hoare — whose past roles have included running Cope Allman, the packaging group bought from Michael Ashcroft's ADT, and helping to restructure National Home Loans — is to be Laura Ashley's chief operating officer. He will be paid a basic salary of about £250,000, with a generous share option package that he will not be able to redeem for at least three years.

Ms Iverson said that Mr Hoare would sort out the company's production problems, which led to it predicting that it will make no profit this year after recording a £10 million surplus in 1996. Ms Iverson said: "The problems we have are with the supply chain, with processes needing to communicate with each other on day-to-day business, with forecasting and finance. Mr Hoare's appointment would allow her to concentrate on the retailing side of Laura Ashley, she said."

Mr Hoare will remain a partner in Talisman Management, the business he set up with Rik Grogan when the duo left Bain & Co, the management consultancy, in 1987. At Bain, they advised Guinness during its controversial bid for Distillers. Olivier Roux, then Guinness's finance director, is a consultant at Talisman.

RJB starts to shed contract workers

RJB MINING, which faces increasing industrial unrest over redundancy terms and over its failure to secure new contracts with the electricity generators, has begun to shed contract workers (Christine Buckley writes).

Arnault hints at pact on Guinness

By DOMINIC WALSH

BERNARD ARNAULT, the chairman of LVMH, the French luxury goods group, gave a clear signal yesterday that he is willing to compromise on his objections to the proposed merger of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan.

Mr Arnault, who is the biggest shareholder in both the British companies, will next month put forward fresh proposals aimed at securing the inclusion of LVMH's Moët Hennessy drinks business in the British companies' merger. In July, he proposed that Moët Hennessy be merged with the drinks divisions of Guinness and GrandMet in a separately quoted company, with Guinness Brewing and GrandMet's Pillsbury and Burger King businesses spun off.

A spokesman for M Arnault said that, after discussions with analysts and fund managers, he was now willing to accept less than the 35 per cent of the enlarged drinks company that he had demanded. "He is prepared not to be a controlling shareholder," said the spokesman, citing 25 to 30 per cent as a "likely range".

This was seen as a softening of M Arnault's stance, but his continued call for the three-way drinks company to be demerged is unlikely to find favour with Guinness and GrandMet. GMG Brands, as the merged company is to be known, said: "If there is sensible deal to be done, then GMG will do that deal. But it has to be based on fair value for all shareholders."

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Tony Neary on theft charges

By JON ASHWORTH

TONY NEARY, the former British Lion rugby star and co-founder of Cotton Traders, the mail order leisurewear group, has been arrested and charged with theft and fraud involving £776,500.

Mr Neary, 48, most recently registered at an address in Alderley Edge, Cheshire, was arrested at Manchester Airport last month. He appeared before Liverpool magistrates on 12 counts of theft and two counts of fraud. He is due to appear in court again later this month.

Merseyside police interviewed Mr Neary under caution in February 1995. Investigations centred on allegations that Mr Neary, a lawyer, had invested £500,000 of trust fund money in property development companies that later collapsed.

The former England flanker was company secretary of Cotton Traders, which he co-founded ten years ago. Mr Neary resigned as a director of Cotton Traders in August 1993. There is no suggestion that the company is implicated in the circumstances leading up to his arrest.

The alleged fraud involves the beneficiaries of trusts associated with the late John Gorn, a Manchester lawyer. Mr Neary was unavailable for comment yesterday.



Neary: founded Traders

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Hampel report 'needs changes'

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

A LEADING institutional shareholder yesterday told Sir Clive Thompson, chief executive of Rentokil Initial and a member of the Hampel Committee on corporate governance, that there needs to be fundamental changes to the draft Hampel report before a final report is published later this year.

Alastair Ross Goobey, chief executive of Hermes, the Post Office and telecommunications fund manager, said leading institutions would insist on three independent directors on large and most small company boards, with the independence of directors judged by outsiders, rather than as Hampel suggested, a company's board.

Secondly, institutional investors had concerns about the structure of remuneration committees, and about the role of non-executive directors. He and others specifically rejected Hampel's suggestion that full boards should approve remuneration committee's recommendations on pay, since it would mean executives approving their own pay packages.

Mr Ross Goobey was speaking at the conference on the Hampel committee organised by Pirc, the shareholder activist group. Anne Simpson, Pirc joint managing director, went further when questioned by business leaders about whether the Hampel report was too lax, whether it was a "fat cat's charter" and whether the problems over the way companies were run required more than voluntary codes. She told the conference: "I think on some issues there is a case for the law to change", including the duties of directors and the powers of shareholders covered in the Companies Act.

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BA faces inquiry on sales practice

By CHARLES BRENNER AND DOMINIC WALSH

BRITISH AIRWAYS is to face questioning by the European Commission over claims that its sales practices amount to an abuse of its dominant position. It found guilty, it could face a fine of up to 10 per cent of its turnover.

BA, already embroiled with Brussels over its proposed alliance with American Airlines, stands accused of luring international passengers into flying exclusively with BA and of paying travel agents higher commission depending on levels of business generated.

The Commission, alerted to the practices by Virgin, BA's rival, said the discounts appeared to breach article 86 of the Treaty of Rome banning abuse of a dominant position of a market. It issued a statement of objections in January and now expects to convene a hearing at the end of next month.

However, a spokesman for Karel van Miert, the Competition Commissioner, said yesterday that the inquiry was far from complete and a decision was not likely before the end of the year. "It is ludicrous to jump to conclusions and claim that the Commission is about to impose fines in this case," he said.

BA denies any wrongdoing, arguing that its sales techniques are common in the industry. Virgin said the practices were widespread but added: "The activities have to be judged in the context of BA's position in the market."



Andrew Garey, Liberty finance director, left, with Denis Cassidy and Ian Thomson, who saw a rise in pre-tax profits

World Bank head tells Brown to write off debt

FROM JANET BUSH IN HONG KONG

JAMES WOLFENSOHN, the President of the World Bank, yesterday called on Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to write off up to £3.8 billion of debts owed to Britain by Third World countries.

Mr Wolfensohn has called on the Chancellor to back his own call by writing off the debts in support of the move to rekindle international support for the bank's debt relief initiative.

Mr Wolfensohn was responding to Mr Brown's call on Commonwealth finance ministers in Mauritius earlier

in the week to ensure that at least three-quarters of those countries currently being considered for debt relief should have firm agreements negotiated by the millennium. Mr Brown dubbed his effort the Mauritius Mandate.

"If Gordon Brown wants to put up some cash, that would be very welcome," Mr Wolfensohn told a large audience in Hong Kong for the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Britain is owed a total of about £3.8 billion by countries likely to be eligible at some

stage under the highly indebted countries initiative (HIPC), which has become the main vehicle for debt relief. The vast majority of this money is owed to the Export Credit Guarantee Department.

The World Bank president displayed real frustration yesterday with growing criticism of HIPC, which has yet to provide relief to a single country. The bank has pledged £1 billion, but there has been foot-dragging by the IMF and implacable opposition to the idea from Germany, Japan and Italy.

Mr Wolfensohn said: "This

is a moral issue and a development issue but it is also an issue of money. In the end, it comes down to you, the voters and taxpayers in our member countries. Are you prepared to pay?"

The debt issue will be on the table for discussion both at today's meeting of the Group of Seven industrialised countries and tomorrow's meeting of the IMF's powerful interim committee.

The initiative has been stalled for not having yet provided relief to a single country — Uganda is planned to be the first to benefit.

Japanese tourists lose yen for Liberty

By DOMINIC WALSH

THE flocks of Japanese tourists who descend on Liberty, the Regent Street store, when they visit London are waning as a result of the weakness of the yen.

In sales terms, the Japanese are second in the pecking order behind domestic customers, and the company admitted the currency factor was having "a depressive effect" at both its central London store and its four kiosks at Heathrow airport.

Denis Cassidy, chairman, said that the 10 per cent rise in interim turnover from current operations, to £27.3 million, "might have been about 14 per cent if it weren't for the weakness of the yen and the strength of sterling against other currencies".

Group pre-tax profits at Liberty, which last year closed its 21 provincial stores, rose almost a third to £863,000 in the six months to August 2, and the interim dividend, which went unpaid last year, has been restored at a level of 0.8p, payable on November 13. A trading loss of £137,000 was reported as a result of an extra £1.2 million investment in marketing, design and product development.

Sales at the flagship store, which is in the middle of a £40 million revamp, were up 9.5 per cent, although profits were just 3.5 per cent better because of the extra Sunday opening costs. Mr Cassidy, who was brought in two years ago to revive Liberty's fortunes, said the restructuring of the group was almost complete.

Ian Thomson, managing director, said Liberty would be opening an outlet at the new Windsor Station retail development before Christmas, and continued to seek opportunities for expansion overseas.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

WPP media-buying operations to merge

OGILVY & MATHER and J Walter Thompson, the two world advertising divisions of WPP, plan to merge their British media-buying operations in a move that is expected to be announced formally on Monday. Shares in WPP, the media agency group, rose 1p to 286p. The move, long expected in media circles, will give WPP greater impact in the media buying sector, which is consolidating and placing greater emphasis on the need for buying power. In 1996 the two media-buying operations of WPP together earned fees of £373 million.

WPP faces competition from specialist media buying companies such as CIA and Aegis. They are preferred by multinational clients to traditional advertising agencies when it comes to media buying. WPP owns a stake of more than 12 per cent in CIA and is expected at some point to make a bid for the rest. Any offer would probably have to be agreed by the CIA board, however, because staff and directors of CIA own a substantial minority stake.

ENIC in Greek talks

ENIC, the investment trust that owns 25 per cent of Glasgow Rangers, is in talks to take a controlling stake in AEK Athens, the Greek club that put Rangers out of the Champions League two years ago. The trust is talking to Michalis Trihanas, whose company, SOE, owns 79 per cent of AEK and is attempting to sell the stake for about £5.5 million. ENIC recently purchased a 30 per cent stake in Vicenza, last year's Italian cup winner, and hopes to float the club on the Milan stock exchange.

Broken Hill disappoints

SHARES in Broken Hill, Australia's biggest listed company, plunged to a three-year low after it reported weaker than expected earnings. The steel, mining and oil group reported a first-quarter net profit of A\$371 million (£158 million). A one-off gain from the sale of an investment boosted the bottom line by A\$73 million. Before the abnormal gain, BHP's earnings for the three months to August 31 were A\$284 million, 1 per cent lower than last year.

Eurocamp confident

EUROCAMP, the leisure facilities group, saw a solid advance this year and has forecast further progress for 1998, sending its shares up 4p to 238½p. In a trading statement, Eurocamp said: "We are able to confirm the indications given earlier of a much improved performance from our camping businesses in 1997. Whilst overall booking volumes have been in line with last year, we have been successful in meeting our prime objective, which was to restore profit margins to more acceptable levels."

Break-up plan for BSC

DAVID JAMES, the company doctor brought in to sort out the ailing British Shoe Corporation for Sears, has proposed breaking up the business and selling it off in parts. The move comes after attempts by JP Morgan, the merchant bank, to sell the entire business for Sears failed to secure a financially acceptable bid. The plans will be presented with the Sears half-year figures on Thursday and are expected to lead to a write-off of up to £200 million.

Warning hits Prism

SHARES in Prism Leisure fell from 167½p to 82½p after the computer games group said its full-year results would be below expectations and that Robert Skelton, the finance director, would leave at the end of the year. His departure was said to be unconnected to the statement. Prism blamed the shortfall on the strong pound, the failure to source the same quality products as in previous years, and a disappointing performance by new eight-pack audio products.

Hotels group expands

SCOTTISH HIGHLAND HOTELS, has agreed to buy two four-star hotels in the North of England from Wiggins Group for £12.8 million cash. The company is to place 4,871,456 new ordinary shares with institutional investors at 140p a share to raise about £6.57 million, net of expenses. Scottish Highland said the remaining £6.6 million will be funded by a newly agreed term facility with Bank of Scotland of £5 million and by £1.6 million from existing bank facilities.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.34	2.16
Austria Sch	2.68	13.42
Belgium Fr	62.08	67.12
Canada Cdn	2.382	2.174
Cyprus Cyp	0.887	0.815
Denmark Kr	11.45	10.56
Finland Mk	0.07	8.26
France Fr	10.08	9.29
Germany Dm	3.02	2.78
Greece Dr	477	458
Hong Kong \$	13.29	12.09
Iceland	128	108
Ireland Ir	1.14	1.05
Israel Shk	5.95	5.30
Italy Lira	211.09	192.50
Japan Yen	209.9	272.2
Malta	0.865	0.806
Netherlands Gld	3.404	3.109
New Zealand \$	2.70	2.48
Norway Kr	12.23	11.29
Portugal Esc	302.53	280.30
S Africa Rd	8.25	7.29
Spain Pta	252.29	233.50
Sweden Kr	19.07	11.97
Switzerland Fr	2.50	2.28
Turkey Lira	285379	265501
USA \$	1.718	1.573

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Spending on credit cards slows rapidly

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

CREDIT card spending slowed rapidly in August, providing further evidence that the windfall effect may be unwinding.

Figures produced by the Credit Card Research Group showed the annual growth for all credit and debit card spending at about 14 per cent, compared with a quarterly average of 18 per cent.

Elizabeth Phillips, director of the Credit Card Research Group, said: "Sluggish August card expenditure figures mirror the picture painted by

many retailers of slow sales growth, possibly reflecting the declining impact of windfall payments."

Expenditure growth was strongest in the food and drink sector, which attracts an increasing proportion of credit card spending, and in the household sector. But spending slowed markedly in the mixed business sector which includes department stores and clothing retailers.

The CCRG said the figures could also have been affected by holiday spending abroad.

Go-Ahead is critical of rises in costs

GO-AHEAD GROUP, the bus company, yesterday said that Government-imposed cost increases would hinder operators' ability to renew bus fleets (Carl Mortished writes). Martin Ballinger, managing director, said that fuel tax rises, abolition of profit-related pay and the effect of tax increases on pension funds would harm his group's efforts to achieve profit targets. Go-Ahead is to spend £32 million in the current year on fleet renewal, he said.

Pre-tax profit for the year to June 28 rose 81 per cent, to £21.5 million. Operating margins were 12.7 (10.5) per cent. The dividend is 8p, up 44 per cent. *Tempus, page 32*

Jardine fears fall in underlying profits

By ERIC REGULY

JARDINE MATHESON, the British trading "hong" that owns Hongkong Land, yesterday gave warning that reduced merchant banking profits and economic problems in some Asian countries will damage underlying profits this year.

The company said: "While the prospects for Greater China remain encouraging, other Asia economies are experiencing mixed fortunes. Against this backdrop, we expect the full year's profits, excluding non-recurring items, broadly to reflect the trend in the first half."

In the half year to June 30,

Jardine's operating profits fell by 6 per cent to US\$142.5 million (£99 million) on a 3 per cent rise in turnover to \$5.74 billion.

Pre-tax profits rose by almost 6 per cent to \$466.1 million. The figures included a one-off gain of \$130 million on the sale of Jardine's life insurance business. The interim dividend remains 7.8 cents.

Jardine said that Hongkong Land's Mandarin Oriental hotel had made a good start to the year, but the company expects a decline in the second half in the wake of the handover by Britain of Hong Kong to China in July.

NewRo picks Canary

By MARTIN WALLER

THE new pan-regulatory body for financial services has chosen a building on Canary Wharf for its headquarters. The nine existing regulators that make up the new body, which currently works under

the title NewRo, will move to 25 The North Colonnade by the end of next year.

The decision is a blow for the Corporation of London, which has been trying to keep the regulators within the City boundaries. But a spokeswoman for NewRo said the Canary Wharf site "is the only property that actually met our total requirements".

These were to house 2,000 people in all; to be ready as soon as possible; to be flexible internally; and to be cost-effective.

Judith Mayhew, the chairman of the corporation's policy and resources committee, admitted disappointment at the NewRo decision but said the corporation had been concentrating on keeping the markets and the main traders and institutions within the Square Mile.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES



Stockbrokers — is it time to trade-in yours?

The winners of the Stockbrokers Awards 1997 are announced in this week's Investors Chronicle.

We reveal the names of the UK's top stockbrokers across several categories as judged by their customers. Categories judged are: Dealing Only, Dealing with Advice, Advisory/Discretionary, and Portfolio Management.

More than 1800 Investors Chronicle readers give you their verdict on service and value for money from stockbroking firms across the UK.

Find out what readers believe makes a good stockbroker and for the first time take a look at what aspects of dealing with stockbrokers frustrate them most.

We examine both dealing only and advisory/discretionary firms to help you select the best service for your future needs.

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On sale Friday, 19th September, £2.50.

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*As at 30 June 1997 and excluding the Western operations, the proposed disposal of which has been announced.

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A WORKING WEEK FOR: CHARLES GOODHART

The economist who inhabits two worlds

Alasdair Murray meets the academic from LSE who uses the numbers game even when it comes to sheep farming

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

IT IS a long way from the grandeur of the Bank of England's Threadneedle Street headquarters to a cramped office in a rather run-down outbuilding at the London School of Economics.

But Charles Goodhart, Norman Sosnow Professor of Banking and Finance at the LSE and external member of the monetary policy committee, comfortably inhabits the two worlds.

The son of an academic, Professor Goodhart was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge before spending 17 years in a variety of roles at the Bank of England. Since moving back full-time into academia in 1985, his academic work has not surprisingly centred on issues such as monetary policy and regulation. Aptly enough, his most famous contribution to economics points to the problems inherent in trying to use imperfect data to set interest rate policy.

"Goodhart's Law" states that if policy-makers rely purely on one set of monetary statistics the data is likely to become unreliable over time — a salient reminder of some of the absurd decisions that resulted from the obsessive concentration on M3 figures during the 1980s. The new monetary policy framework has engendered a good deal of interest. But with no "Ken and Eddie"-style policy disagreements yet emerging among committee members — all the votes have been unanimous and the minutes show no dissent — controversy has been kept to a minimum.

Professor Goodhart believes that the committee's common approach to interest rate decisions ensures coherence in discussions. "We speak a common language although there are obviously nuances of views and we hold tough debates," he says. "But the differences are never likely to cover more than a quarter or half-point move in interest rates. You are into the realm of psychology with the ultimate decision as much based on the perceived impact on the markets."

Unlike the Ken and Eddie show, where politics was never far from the substance of the meetings, the new monetary framework is a highly technical affair. The most important week is the first full week of each month, when a lull in the release of economic data provides a suitable window for the committee to meet. Meetings begin on the previous Friday when the Bank staff present a review of the available data and the committee hears from the Bank's regional and sectoral agenda.

"The presentation is entirely factual and gives us a chance to listen," Professor Goodhart explains. Committee members are then given a chance to mull over the data before assembling again the following Wednesday. The second meeting is used to set the agenda and background

context for the decision "but we consciously try to avoid policy decisions", he says. The committee then returns home in purdah overnight before making an early start to the final meeting on Thursday. The decision has to be taken by 11am to give the Bank time to prepare a release for the markets at midday.

Some supporters of independence have been disappointed that the committee has not drawn on a wider range of expertise. In particular, there are no obvious representatives from business and industry, although DeAnne Julius was chief economist at British Airways before she joined the committee this month. There is a feeling that even the outside members, supposedly there to bolster the independence of the committee, resemble too much the Bank's own appointees.

Professor Goodhart insists that the committee's reliance on technically trained economists is inevitable given the nature of the job.

"The main difficulty with setting interest rate policy is that it has very long lags," he explains. "You are looking one to two years ahead and therefore need to be able to forecast. If there wasn't this time lag, life would be very easy but forecasting is very much of the essence."

It is this same emphasis on the technical skills needed to make interest rate decisions that leads Professor Goodhart to wholeheartedly support central bank independence. "It is very difficult for politicians to react to forecasts rather than events. It is much easier for a central bank," he says.

There was no committee meeting last week, but Professor Goodhart still aims to spend about

two days at the Bank. "I need to catch up on correspondence and review the reading material," he says. As the new system develops, the long-term aim is for all the outside members to become involved with Bank research. Mervyn King, who will shortly step up to become Deputy Governor, has already made it clear that he would welcome the non-Bank expertise on offer from Professor Goodhart, Willem Buiter and DeAnne Julius.

Outside members are also expected to become involved in the Bank's quarterly inflation report — the Bank's own detailed assessment of the economic outlook. Professor Goodhart is clear that the publication has become the official report of the MPC and the external committee members need to discuss and question its assumptions.

For the rest of the week, Professor Goodhart is fulfilling his "half-time" commitments to the London School of Economics. "But it feels like full time by the time you have made room for covering colleagues' lectures and classes."

His sudden elevation to the monetary policy committee in May rather dashed any hopes of taking time off in the summer as he set about trying to finish many, already promised papers and lectures. But, despite the hefty time



Charles Goodhart sees no contradiction between his official role at the Bank of England and the need to maintain academic independence at LSE

commitments to the Bank, he is determined to press on with his own research and sees no contradiction between his official role and the need to maintain academic independence.

Professor Goodhart caused something of a stir when just days after his appointment to the MPC he expressed strong scepticism about Gordon Brown's separate plans to set up a super-regulator. His comments would have received only limited interest before his appointment, but in his new position commentators were quick to play up an apparent slap in the face for Mr Brown.

"The monetary policy committee is not involved with financial stability. I intend to continue my outside work and commentate on anything not specifically connected with the MPC."

He is currently working on a paper exploring the credit risks inherent in national bond issues after monetary union, a subject that could again ruffle a few feathers across Europe. But while Professor Goodhart fully understands the heightened media and City interest in the decisions of the MPC he appears a little bemused by the interest in other aspects of his affairs. When arranging this interview he rather self-effacingly questioned whether *The Times* would really be

interested in a dull academic rather than some dynamic captain of industry.

In general Professor Goodhart believes the press treatment of the committee has to date been very fair. Committee mem-

bers are not being dogged by the incessant questioning, designed at drawing some off-the-cuff remark that might just move the market, which is endured by Bundesbank council members for instance.

Even so, the Bank sends along a minder to interviews just in case the questioning should stray into sensitive terrain.

Clearly the Bank of England has changed greatly in the 12 years since he

left its employ, but Professor Goodhart believes the impact has been greater on the soon-to-be defunct supervision department.

Economic technical skills have "improved" and he cites the Bank's "unique" inflation risks model which is included as part of its inflation projection in the quarterly inflation report. But supervision has had to develop an entirely different approach.

"Once upon a time the approach was to find best practices in the City and codify these. But the growth of derivatives has brought huge problems for regulation and made it vital to adopt an economic/mathematical modelling approach to risk."

The demands of two jobs have not left Professor Goodhart much time for his own pursuits. He admits that he has all

but retired from playing tennis and his court at Devon is increasingly covered in weeds. But Saturdays are devoted to his wife's Dartmoor sheep farm and "not thinking about economics".

But even in sheep farming, Professor Goodhart delights in the science. "Sheep farming is a numbers game. You need to try to raise around 1.75 lambs for each ewe," he says before launching into a detailed explanation of the intricacies of sheep breeding.

But will the rigours of the lambing season not potentially clash with an important Bank of England interest rate decision? Professor Goodhart checks his diary. "I must mention to my wife that we need to move lambing forward next year, so it doesn't clash with the April monetary meeting," he says.

The Chancellor has announced that there will be changes to the tax regime of PEPs with effect from 06.04.99. Until this date, PEPs will retain their tax-free status. After this date, it may no longer be possible to continue your investment into a PEP. Full details of the Individual Savings Account (ISA) including details for transferring into ISAs have yet to be planned. You should contact your independent financial adviser if you have only before investing. The price of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up — you may not get back as much as you invest. M&G do not offer investment advice or make any recommendations regarding investments. We only market the packaged products and services of the M&G investment group. Source: Office of National Statistics. *Source: M&G UK Fixed Interest sector. M&G Unit Traders are managed by M&G Securities Limited regulated by FSA and the Personal Investment Authority. Issued by M&G Financial Services Limited, regulated by The Personal Investment Authority — registered address: M&G House, Victoria Road, Chesham, Bucks HP8 1PE.

Rumbling on

AN UNNOTICED casualty of the Price Waterhouse-Coopers & Lybrand megamerge announced this week is the legal action still dragging on between the administrators of the Maxwell empire and the auditors of the same. They are, respectively, Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand, and the case cannot continue in its present form.

"It would look a bit odd," mused a PW spokesman. "People would say, what's to stop them being very generous with each other." Quite. The best option would be to bring in another accountant to pursue the action, which hinges on whether Coopers should or should not have noticed Robert Maxwell's misdeeds — Arthur Andersen, which carries out the same function for the private Maxwell companies, springs to mind. This would be better than making PW give up as administrators. But either way there will be yet more delay as the newcomer is briefed in laborious detail. "Whichever way you cut the cards, there is going to be some disruption," admits PW. And whichever way you cut the cards, this is the case that dragged on for so long that the two parties had actually

merged before it could be resolved. Oh clever, fat, happy little lawyers.

AMERICAN AIRLINES may still be horse-trading with the powers that be over the link with British Airways. But an earlier round of bargaining has been rather too successful, I learn. A couple of years ago an airline executive did a deal with the Grosvenor House hotel on Park Lane. American would get free rooms. Grosvenor staff business class tickets. A one-way trade ensued, so one-way that the airline now has tens of thousands of pounds worth of rooms waiting to be used up in return for flights taken. It recently stuck three executives into the top suites at the Grosvenor in an attempt to burn off a few thousand.

Raided

I HEAR of yet another raid on a top-ranking analyst from one of the big houses. Paribas, which has been going through a burst of hiring for its equities side since the business moved to its incredibly posh new headquarters at Marylebone last month, has snaffled Nick Stevenson, pan-European equity strategist, from SBC Warburg. Sorry, SBC Warburg Dillon Read, as its poor switchboard operators are now required to parrot. Stevenson, 40, who was top of this year's Extel survey, is described as something of a bon viveur and Francophile — he was officially still employed by Warburg until yesterday, but was on holiday at his house at Avignon.

Déjà vu

GORDON BROWN's grand-sounding Mauritius Mandate, his call for progress



you might like to know that
Tweed's prediction for the end
of the year is 5,176.3.

Bank note

TIME was when banks restricted themselves to keeping tally of your finances and writing the odd sarcastic letter when these went awry. Nowadays they have to court the youth vote. One already gives away fistfuls of pop CDs to prospective customers. Now the Midland is funding an 18-day pop festival in December at Battersea Power Station, at a cost to the bank of just short of £1 million.

The festival will include 24 shows which are expected to attract more than 170,000 people. In a move to limit the association of music festivals with the alternative culture of drink and drugs, one learns, Midland will include performances from a 600-voice gospel group and a children's area. That should do the trick. 600-voice gospel choirs are, as we all know, to drug-pushers as garlic is to vampires.

Trivia buffs will already have recalled that this is Battersea Power Station's second major contribution to pop culture. Some time towards the end of the Pleistocene it featured on the front of a Pink Floyd album.

MARTIN WALLER

WE ALL like to think we can predict the markets better than all those overpaid analysts. Balls Bros, the wine bar operator, held a competition to find out. Customers in April and May were asked to guess the level of the FTSE 100 index at the end of July. Chris Tweed, 31, an IT project manager at Nomura, was almost spot on at 4,900.3 to the actual 4,907.5. Yesterday he picked up his prize, a meishusaleh of Louis Roederer champagne, equivalent to eight bottles, engraved with the Stock Exchange coat of arms. With this track record,



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Maxwell: legacy continues

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

ICI falls victim to sector's third-quarter weakness

ICI was one of the worst casualties among the top 100 companies, falling 32p to 986p, after one of its biggest fans decided investors had probably seen the best of the shares.

Almost 2.5 million shares changed hands as Merrill Lynch, the US securities house, downgraded its recommendation from "accumulate" to "neutral". It follows a profit warning yesterday from another chemical company, Union Carbide in the US.

Robyn Coombes, who follows ICI for Merrill, said: "We know that the third quarter has been weak for the chemical companies. The company is beginning a round-up next week with analysts. I've been a buyer from the bottom up. The shares are now fully valued."

She continues to back the management long term and expects it to complete its restructuring and disposal programme. The rest of the equity market experienced a 40.5 point turnaround as investors and traders saw out the expiry of the FTSE 100 index options and futures.

Business proved to be frenetic in the run-up to the deadline as traders rushed to cover open positions. A total of 15,020 contracts were completed in the future which, in turn, spilled over into the cash market and boosted turnover to 952 million shares — the best of the week.

Société Générale Strauss Turnbull, the broker, was said to have been especially active in the futures pit.

In the event, the opening fall on Wall Street in the run-up to the "triple witching" hour left prices in London down at their low point of the day.

The FTSE 100 index closed 22.4 down at 5,024.2, reducing the gain on the week to 175.6. The gain was not a bad performance considering the spectre of higher interest rates has come back to haunt the City this week. The prospect was raised by stronger than expected retail sales and wage inflation. This, combined with the lowest number of people out of work since 1980, suggests that the economy is continuing to overheat.

Economists such as Neil MacKinnon at Citibank say it could lead to a rise in interest rates of as much as half a point to 7.5 per cent before Christmas.

Yesterday's train crash at Southall, West London, took the edge off an otherwise



Neil Goulden saw Allied Leisure's shares dip despite profit rise

recent week for the Railtrack share price. It has been rising steadily on the back of US buying and suggestions by Panmure Gordon, the broker, that it is ready to crystallise the value of its extensive property portfolio.

The price hit a peak of 855p yesterday but when news of the fatal crash came through the price dropped to 829p.

Tate & Lyle has lost its place as a constituent of the top 100 companies, but closed 6 1/2 p up at 420 1/2 p. The rise renewed speculation that AB Foods, 12p lower at 550 1/2 p and with £1.6 billion cash, wants to make a bid. Such a move would give ABF 80 per cent of the sugar market, but attract the Monopolies Commission.

before rallying to close 1 1/2 p lower at 833p on turnover of 3.1 million shares. The price still ended 65p up on the week.

Carlton Communications rose 12 1/2 p to 511 1/2 p, and Granada Group up 14p at 818p. It follows reports that the Government may offer financial incentives for television companies to buy set-top boxes and switch to digital broadcasting. Pace Micro, which makes the boxes, rose 10p to 60p. Granada gave a talk to

brokers on Thursday and Carlton has joined up with Intermedia to establish a development for film funding.

Reed International fell 7p to 564 1/2 p amid speculation that its joint venture operation, Reed Elsevier, is poised to buy Telerate from Dow Jones Inc.

BOC Group extended this week's gains with a rise of

Smith had made an internal appointment to the role of chief executive after the abrupt departure of Bill Cockburn in June. The shares finished 6 1/2 p off at 366p.

Chiroscience came off the boil, falling 7 1/2 p to 270p after giving a presentation to brokers on Thursday. Tests on its local anaesthetic, levobupivacaine, had progressed well and new data should reinforce its case when it comes to seeking approval from European and US authorities.

A wave of selling by US investors saw De La Rue touch 391 1/2 p before rallying to close a net 5 1/2 p lower on the day at 399 1/2 p.

There seems to be no stopping Pickwick, the Oxford-listed company that has developed "Computer", an electronic golf putting range in a brief case. Placed at just 19p last month, the shares closed last night at 169 1/2 p. It needs to sell 500 "Computer" units a month to break even but already has an order booking running at 2,000 a month. In October, it plans to launch a sales assault on the golf-mad Japanese market.

A profits warning sent Prism Leisure, the computer games group, clattering down 85p to 82 1/2 p. Robert Skelton, finance director, said results for the year would be significantly below current expectations. Sales of computer software had fallen 44 per cent with profits down 31 per cent. The group blamed the strong pound for the downturn in sales.

□ GILT-EDGED: The London bond market gave back some of this week's impressive gains on the back of early losses by US treasury funds. London underperformed other European bond markets as prices drifted on lack of support.

In the futures pit, the December series of the long gilt ended £1 1/2 down at £177 1/2. In the cash market, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 was £5 lower at £161 1/2, while at the shorter end Treasury 6 per cent 1999 slipped a couple of ticks to close at £98 1/2.

□ NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average was down 33.30 points at 7,889.52 at midday, losing ground as investors took profits out of cyclical issues and sorted through the triple expiration of index futures, index options and futures.

The City gave a lukewarm reception to the news that WH

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 7889.52 (+33.30)

S&P Composite 407.16 (+1.10)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average 18058.21 (+128.13)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng 13484.13 (+35.32)

Amsterdam:

EEX Index 4093.39 (+4.68)

Sydney:

AO 2730.40 (+34.10)

Frankfurt:

DAX 4032.97 (+32.49)

Singapore:

SSE 1894.73 (+1.36)

Brussels:

General 13536.63 (+28.40)

Paris:

CAC-40 2977.16 (+1.19)

Zurich:

SIX Gen 1176.60 (+0.40)

London:

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RECENT ISSUES

Antofagasta Cu Vts

Bristol & West Plc

Camell Ltd

Computerland UK

EMI B

Fat Ireland Cnv Unit

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I S Solutions

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Resbourne Merit

SBS Group

Severn Trent B

Stentor Warrants

Thorn B

Viglen Technology

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HEALTH CHEQUE 40

Counting the cost of private medical cover

WEEKEND MONEY

TRUNK CALL 39

Rani lends some weight to Hector's campaign



THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Caroline Merrell says a new survey shows how the present regulations have failed customers

Shakeup for financial services

The Government announced this week that it planned to sweep away the present rules on sales and marketing of financial products, be they Personal Equity Plans (PEPs), endowment savings schemes or pensions. The Financial Services Act, initially drawn up more than a decade ago, which relied on the firms themselves to regulate the industry, will instead be replaced by a legalistic system of regulation, through one regulator, NewRo.

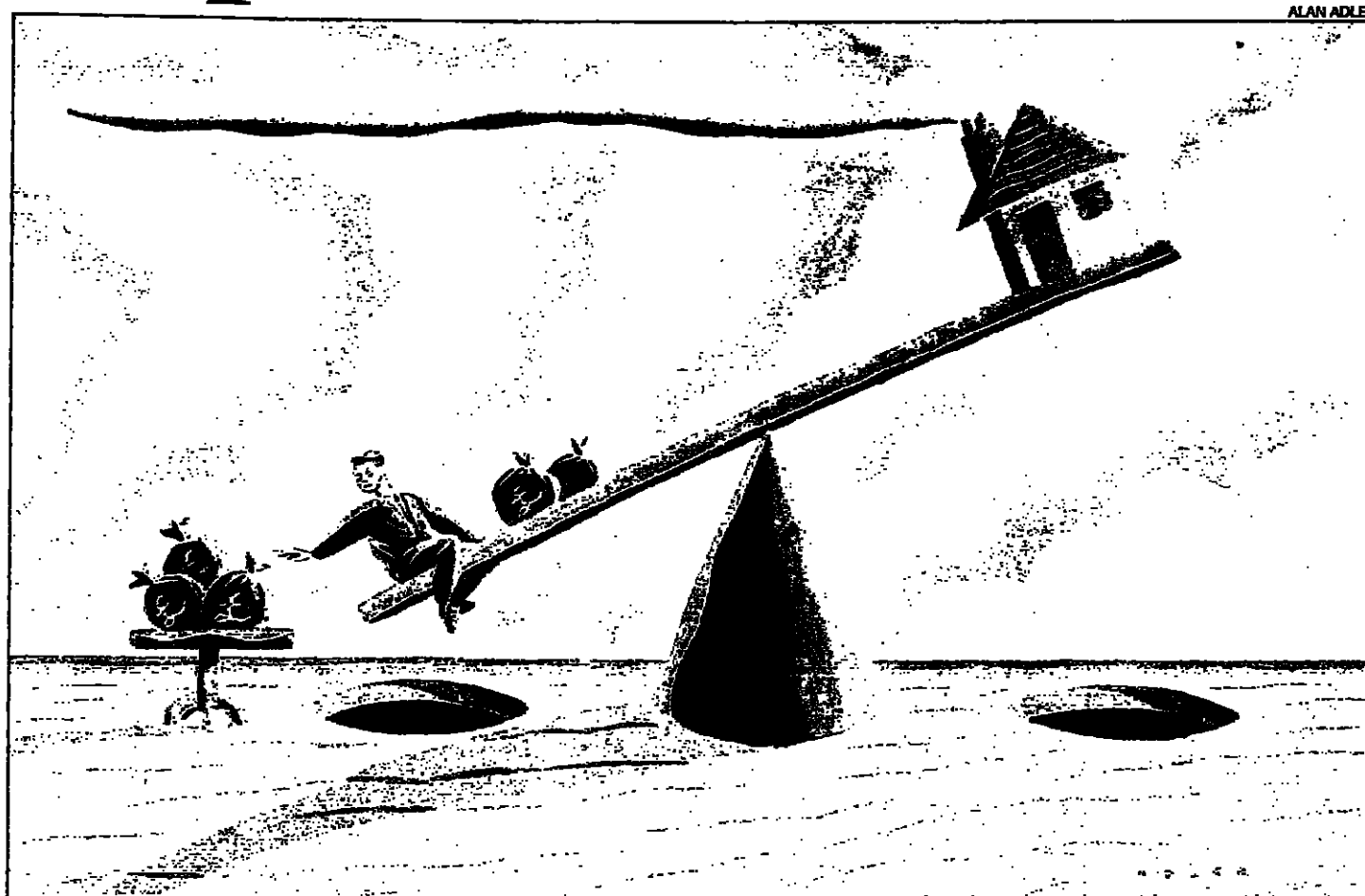
Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury said: "I do not doubt that the men and women who staff the regulators have worked extremely hard to make sense of the Financial Services Act (FSA) but we are expecting them to do a job within a framework that has failed." She added: "What chance had ordinary investors when faced with an alphabet soup of different regulators?"

The FSA has not prevented some of the biggest financial scandals of the century. For example, in spite of the so-called protection of the Act, unscrupulous salesmen were able to persuade ageing homeowners to remortgage to take out high-risk savings plans. Neither did the Act prevent the possible mis-selling of two million personal pension plans, more than a quarter of the total number sold. Compensating victims has only just begun, in spite of the fact that many erroneously bought their pensions nearly a decade ago.

Equally importantly, the Act seems to have failed to introduce true competition among those that sell financial services products.

A survey released this week shows just how the regulations have failed consumers. It revealed that charges on savings plans routinely sold by banks and building societies to pay off mortgages still swallow up as much as a third of the total premiums paid in.

The survey from *Money Marketing*, the trade magazine, showed that in spite of new rules introduced



two years ago, demanding that costs be disclosed to consumers, charges have in fact risen.

The highest charging office from those surveyed was Albany Life — 37 per cent of premiums were used to pay commission and other costs. The cheapest unit-linked endowment came from Equitable Life — only 15 per cent of premiums were swallowed up in charges. The costs include life cover, the salesman's commission and fund management charges. According to the survey, charges on the unit-linked endow-

ment policy have risen 5 per cent, in spite of the fact that full disclosure of the charges was supposed to increase competition and drive down costs.

According to figures from the Association of British Insurers, about five million unit-linked endowments have been sold over the past five years, representing nearly £3 billion of new business to the industry. Fifteen companies refused to participate in the survey, those that refused to provide figures included the life insurance

companies of the UK's biggest banks. For example, Barclays Life, Black Horse Life, and Lloyds TSB, were not included.

A spokeswoman for Lloyds TSB said that it had not participated in the survey because of "time constraints". Anyone who arranges their mortgage through Lloyds TSB could be offered one of its unit-linked endowment plans. Barclays said that it had not provided the figures because the survey was targeted at independent financial advisers. It pointed out that it did

not sell unit-linked endowments through advisers. Others who would not reveal their figures included Century, GAN Life, United and Consolidated Life.

Other high charging offices include Guardian Financial, formerly GRE, which used to provide savings plans for borrowers with the Nationwide Building Society. Charges on Guardian policies swallow up 30 per cent of premiums. Allied Dunbar and Abbey Life, both of which run large salesforces, also have high costs —

again about a third of the premiums are swallowed up by charges. Guardian pointed out that it no longer offered the product, simply because its high charges would make it impossible to sell through independent financial advisers. It did admit that it had 18,000 Freedom plans in force.

Apart from the Equitable, other cheap policies also came from Halifax Life, the wholly owned life insurance company of the Halifax, the UK's biggest lender. Scottish Widows, Abbey National Life, Sun Life and Scottish Amicable also offered some of the lower charging savings plans. According to the survey, the top estimated maturity value from Equitable Life would be £72,368, while the lowest estimated maturity value is from Albany Life with just £54,523.

John Jenkins, an actuary with KPMG, which helped to carry out the survey pointed out that it was not clear whether these types of endowments would be on course to pay off loans as they were intended. He said: "Unit-linked companies tend to be better at keeping their savers under regular review."

The survey also looked at the performance of unit-linked pension plans. According to figures from the ABI, sales of unit-linked pensions are on the increase. £1.2 billion of single-premium unit-linked pensions were sold in the first six months of this year alone.

The lowest charging products were from Skandia Life, Equitable Life, Britannia Life, Scottish Equitable, Norwich Union and Rothschild Asset Management.

The survey also compared different unit-linked savings policies on the amount they repaid to investors if they were surrendered after three years and after 10 years. They were also rated on their maturity values. Again Equitable Life scored highly with an A+A+ rating, while Allied Dunbar achieved only a C-C-C.

Mis-selling head count set to climb

The Government revealed this week that a further 1.5 million people could have been mis-sold a personal pension. Work on finding these people, who are in addition to the 600,000 that have already been highlighted, has not even started. Helen Liddell, economic secretary to the Treasury, hinted this week that she would expect the companies to start trying to find these 1.5 million as soon as they had dealt with the 600,000 priority cases.

She pointed out that many in the non-priority category were probably not even aware that they could be victims of mis-selling and that many were young people and those on short-term employment contracts who felt they were being financially prudent by taking out a pension. The companies have not yet been ordered by the Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the chief city watchdog, to carry out a review of these cases.

An SIB spokeswoman said: "We wanted to try and sort out the priority cases first." The companies guilty of mis-selling will look at non-priority cases even though they are not yet under regulatory pressure to do so.

You could be one of these 1.5 million if you are under 35 and took out a personal pension rather than joining a company scheme, or if you are under 35 and transferred out of a company scheme to take out a personal pension.

If you think you have been affected, the quicker you contact the life insurance company or financial adviser who sold you the product, the quicker you will be compensated.

City expects flying start for shares in Northern Rock

First National, the Republic of Ireland's largest society, will come to the market in 18 to 24 months, as predicted by *The Times* in April (Marianne Curphey writes). The 220,000 members will receive windfalls of about £1,800. Those savers and borrowers with First National's UK businesses will not benefit as they are not members of the mutual organisation. First National postal accounts are deposit accounts, without membership rights. Those, however, who followed *Weekend Money's* advice and opened accounts with the society in the Republic should qualify for windfalls.

Meanwhile 885,000 beneficiaries of the Northern Rock conversion have just 11 days to wait for their payouts. When the business makes its market debut on October 1, the shares could open as high as 420p, yielding members an average windfall of £2,100 each. Insid-

ers say institutions have indicated they are willing to pay between 410p and 420p per share as an opening price. More conservative estimates suggest the shares will begin trading on October 1 at 390p, which would yield members an average £1,900 each from their 500 free shares.

Northern Rock members have until Friday to tell the society what they want done with their shares.

City Index, the bookmakers, were yesterday quoting a price of £3.80 to £3.90 per share, which suggests big pension funds and other institutional buyers expect the price to open higher. This is in spite of the shares of former building societies having languished recently. Halifax, at 725p, has failed to recover its first-day high of 774p, while Woolwich has fallen from a peak of 368p on the first day of trading to 325p.

Only Alliance & Leicester has grown, ending the week at 667p.

The price predictions come in spite of industry comments that the institutions are sated with the shares of building societies that have converted to banks. Some believe Northern Rock will struggle to excite professional investors. Others point to Northern's aggressive management.

As many as a third of Northern Rock members are likely to sell their windfall shares when it converts next month, according to research by Barclays Stockbrokers.

Over five to ten years, about half of all those members who were given the free shares are likely still to be holding them. Thomas Sheridan, chief executive of Barclays Stockbrokers, points to the Abbey National, which demutualised eight years ago and where half of original shareholders still have shares.

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

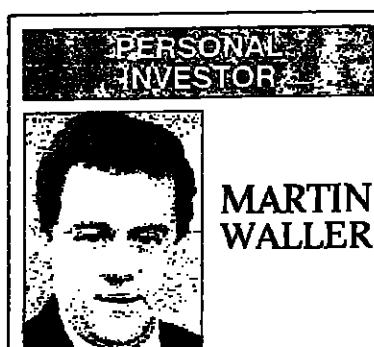
Watchdog's teething problems

If you are planning an especially audacious scam to part thousands of the gullible from their money, a new and entirely valueless personal finance product, perhaps, then I have one piece of advice for you — do it now. Or at least have the scam on the market and the money safely stashed in the Lesser Antilles by next spring. The watchdogs that would normally try to prevent you are being brought under the same kennel roof, and they will be spending the next few months snapping at each other.

The new body that will control all aspects of financial regulation has no name — it trades under the ugly acronym NewRo — and until yesterday nowhere to call home. By the end of next month Howard Davies, the former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England and the man charged with heading the new body, will have found a name. Yesterday NewRo announced it would be inhabiting a swish new office block at Canary Wharf.

A move to this downriver location for eight of the nine constituent parts of the new body — one, the Personal Investment Authority, is already there — will not be universally popular, and some staff will inevitably find this a good reason to leave. But the real problems are more deep-seated.

No one is too sure why the present two-tier system of self-regulation in the City was set up in such a clumsy fashion in the late 1980s. No one is defending it, either. It created individual regulators to look after the different providers and types of financial products — one body



MARTIN WALLER

for life insurance and unit trusts, one for financial intermediaries, and so on. The Bank of England remained in charge of banking supervision and the Stock Exchange ran the stock markets. Riding herd over the regulators was the top tier, the Securities and Investments Board. The results were, perhaps, predictable — turf wars and the shuffling around of responsibilities. The consumer got a bad deal; cases such as pensions mis-selling or the collapse of Knight Williams resulted in endless procrastination. And no one, still, has a good word to say for Sir Andrew Large, Mr Davies's predecessor and the SIB's former head.

The decision has already been taken to divide the new body according to regulatory functions, such as supervision and investigation, rather than by business sector. Mr Davies has to bring those nine bodies together as a unitary organisation and decide how this should regulate financial services. Each of the nine has its own management and

enjoys considerable autonomy. The suspicion is that each of these management units will spend the next six months jockeying for position and backstabbing their potential rivals. Or they will decide the game is not worth the candle and, like Collette Bowe, chief executive of the PIA, refuse any future position at NewRo. They know there is not going to be room for all of them. Some will already be looking elsewhere.

If you are chairman of one of the nine, they don't need you anyway — one figurehead, Mr Davies, is enough. If you are chief executive, you face effective demotion. So those that decide to stay with NewRo will not necessarily be the best.

There are difficult decisions to be made at NewRo. Funding is one. The size and form of penalties another — the notion now of fining a City mega-institution a couple of hundred thousand pounds is largely discredited, while publicity in the form of "naming and shaming" has been of dubious worth in combating pensions mis-selling. And how heavy should the burden of regulation be, and should City institutions be offered less protection than the retail investor?

Hanging over Mr Davies is the certainty that two or three years down the line the new structure of regulation means all the responsibility rests with him. Ultimately, the job of super-regulator will end in failure and, probably, resignation. This is a long-term concern, but there are plenty of short-term worries before then.

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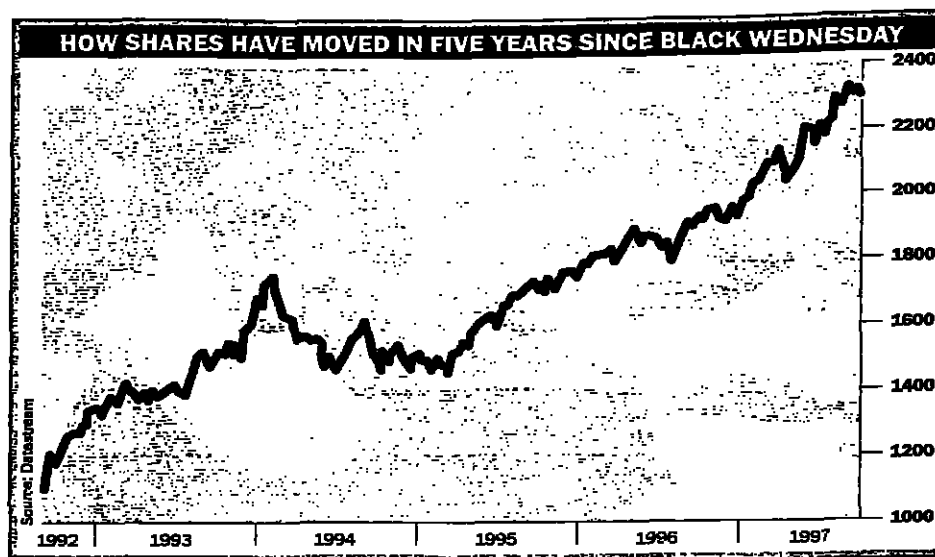
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John Givens gives advice on how to choose a stockbroker

From a mini to a Rolls-Royce

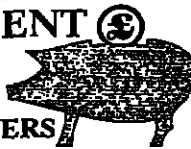


Five years since Black Wednesday

THIS is a season of anniversaries for the financial markets. Next month sees the 10th anniversary of Black Monday, October 19, the market crash of 1987. Economists celebrated the fifth anniversary of Black Wednesday, September 16, when Britain withdrew from the exchange-rate mechanism. Since that day, the FT All Share index has risen strongly (see left). The anniversary coincided this year with news that Warren Buffett, the guru of small US investors, was switching from stocks to bonds. Investors on both sides of the Atlantic followed him but there was no overall impact on London shares.

INVESTMENT

A GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS



investment aims, reporting regularly on how your portfolio is performing. Portfolio management can be expensive as you will probably be charged commission on each deal and an annual fee.

DEALING ONLY

THE cheapest way to buy and sell shares is through a dealing-only or execution-only service. You tell the broker exactly what you want to do, give details of which shares you are buying or selling, the amount and when you want the transaction to take place. The broker acts on your instructions and either send you a bill for the purchase of shares or a cheque from the proceeds of a sale. It is not allowed to give advice on buying or selling.

ADVISORY DEALING

DEALING with advice means a broker talks you through your investment decisions, making you aware of anything that may affect the deal and helping to sort out any paperwork. You may benefit from tips to buy or sell particular shares.

PORTFOLIO SERVICE

INVESTORS with £50,000 or more to play with can enjoy a full portfolio management service which can be either advisory or discretionary. With advisory portfolio management, a broker makes recommendations about buying or selling shares or other investments but awaits your approval. Discretionary management means he takes investment decisions and deals to achieve your

TELEPHONE DEALING

FOR best value share dealing direct telephone-based brokers are hard to beat. ShareLink, based in Birmingham, is the UK's largest direct-dealing broker, handles one in ten of all share deals on the London Stock Exchange. It will sell up to £500 worth of popular utility shares — through its Easidial postal facility for a minimum fee of £7.50. Sales between £501 and £1,000 are charged at a flat fee of £10, rising to £15 for amounts for £1,001-£2,000 and £25 for deals worth between £2,001 and £5,000. Postal sales above this amount are charged on a sliding percentage scale up to a maximum of £75. The ShareLink dealing-only telephone service has a £20 minimum and a £75 maximum.

The Share Centre, another execution-only broker, will buy privatised company shares or those listed in the FTSE 100 index on your behalf for a minimum fee of just £2.50 or 1 per cent of the value of the transaction, whichever is greater. This means purchases up to £250 attract the minimum fee, although you will also need to pay the 0.5 per cent stamp duty levied by the Government on all share purchases. Purchases of shares outside the FTSE 100 are charged at 1.25 per cent. For people selling shares, the minimum fee is £7.50 or 1 per cent, whichever is

greater, for FTSE 100 shares, and £1.25 or 1.25 per cent for non-FTSE 100 stocks. This week The Share Centre introduced a pay-as-you-go advice service to help people using its execution-only service. It costs £15 a quarter excluding VAT and the telephone advice costs £1.50 a minute. Another big telephone service is Cater-Deal, Cater Allen Bank's broker.

Waters Lunniss, the broking arm of Norwich and Peterborough Building Society offers instant-dealing at any of its seven branches in London, Norwich, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Nottingham and Peterborough. As long as you have your share certificate and proof of identity you can swap your shares for a cheque within minutes for a 1.65 per cent fee, minimum £25.

NatWest Stockbrokers has instant dealing for up to £10,000 of shares in more than 1,100 stocks. This is available at 280 of its larger branches for a fee of 1.5 per cent, (minimum £20), though the amount involved is debited or credited to the investor's bank account five days later.

OTHER SERVICES

TRADITIONAL brokers such as Greig Middleton, Albert E Sharp, Gerard Vivian Gray, Capel-Cure Myers and Henderson Crosthwaite typically charge commission of about 1.5 per cent — less for larger transactions — subject to a £20-£25 minimum on sales or purchases.

MoneyFacts, the financial statistics publisher, has a fax service for details of companies offering execution-only share-dealing. Tel: 0336 400245. Calls cost 50p a minute and average seven minutes.

The Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers (APCIMS) publishes an investors' guide to brokers and a directory of members, both available free from APCIMS, 112 Middlesex Street, London, E1 7HY.

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Legal & General Investment Management

ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

BOTH Sainsbury and Tesco now offer a nourishing 6.5 per cent on balances of £1 or more. Tesco claims that it will be able to maintain its competitive edge. We now wait to see whether the building societies will respond to the challenge. Or whether they will continue to hoodwink their customers by launching new accounts with scrumptious rates for savers with £20,000 plus, leaving those with less than £500 with lean cut returns below the rate of inflation.

And the winner is . . . David Wright's prizes continue with reinvested winnings each month coming up again!

Letters, page 43

Regular-premium personal pensions - with profits						
COMPANY	VALUE AT	VALUE AT	RETIREMENT	MTPWS	RATINGS	RATINGS
	YEAR 1	YEAR 20	FUND 10			
Equitable Life	7,899	57,561	241,676	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
General Medical	2,927	56,499	233,343	B A A	B A	B A
London Assurance	3,162	56,428	232,685	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Harrold Union	5,900	52,900	225,000	B A A	B A	B B
NPI	2,747	53,148	222,340	B A B	B C	B C
Scottish Amicable	2,707	52,525	222,790	B A B	B C	B C
Prudential	4,200	52,300	213,820	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Scottish Widows	6,595	51,135	215,235	A B B	B B	B C
Commercial Union	3,574	49,707	229,809	A B B	A B	A C
Northbrook	4,308	49,308	247,000	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Standard Life	6,642	51,191	206,991	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Scottish Mutual	6,181	48,812	208,776	A B B	B C	B B
Legal & General	3,520	52,255	205,840	A B A	C B	C B
Scottish Equitable	3,160	50,657	220,540	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Scottish Equitable	5,160	50,958	236,100	C A C	C B	C B
Royal Insurance	3,126	49,010	227,234	A B A	C C C	C C C
Scottish Widows	5,516	48,109	210,513	B B B	A B	A B
Equity Life	4,076	47,279	224,224	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Prudential	6,733	49,360	185,352	A++ A++ A++	A++	A++
Monument Mutual Life	3,198	48,643	230,696	C B C	C B	C B
Equity Life	4,076	51,545	218,000	C C C	C C C	C C C
Britannic Assurance	7,447	47,626	201,229	B B B	B B	B B
Scottish Life	4,083	50,413	218,825	C B C	C B	C B
NPI Mutual	4,755	50,000	215,543	B B B	B A	B A
Scottish Widows	5,284	49,288	216,000	C B C	C B	C B
Equity Prudential	5,200	45,500	221,000	C B C	B C	B C
Royal London	5,599	48,991	195,999	B B C	B A	B A
Equity Prudential	5,200	49,500	177,000	B B C	B C	B C
Scottish Life	4,083	51,112	200,901	C B C	C B	C B
BNP Paribas	4,915	43,760	216,624	C C A	C B	C B
Equity Life	4,080	51,770	223,635	C C A	C A	C A
Equity & Law	4,190	42,440	184,000	C C C	C C C	C C C
Average	5,496	49,549	219,451			

Based on investment funds of £100 at month's maturity as of 30.9.95. Data not supplied are not yet available.

Investment funds are assumed to grow at 5% per year over 20 years.

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Act now on IHT and don't pay later

The Chancellor may backdate changes to inheritance tax, says Patrick Collinson

Tax advisers are warning clients to review urgently their inheritance tax position in an effort to beat proposals expected in a reform document to be published by the Chancellor later this year.

Gordon Brown surprised the tax planning industry when his first post-election Budget in July failed to tighten up on inheritance tax (IHT) avoidance. But tucked away in the details was a promise to publish a consultation document on tax reform before the next Budget. That paper is now expected within the next three months, and tax advisers fear that if the proposals contained within it become law, they will be backdated to the date of the paper's publication, possibly the end of November.

The Labour Party in Opposition made no secret of its hostility to Conservative Government's progressive relaxation of inheritance taxes, which had made IHT an almost voluntary tax. Although its manifesto made no explicit recommendations, Labour contrasted its approach with "the Tory goal of abolishing capital gains and inheritance tax, at least half the benefit of which will go to the richest 5,000 families in the country".

No one, of course, can be sure what Mr Brown's paper will include (a Treasury spokesman dismissed reports so far as "pure speculation"). But Maurice Fitzpatrick, a taxation specialist at Chantrey Vellacott, the accountant, said: "I think there will be significant changes and my advice is to plan sooner rather than later. The Revenue can issue a press release in which changes are effective from the date of the release - it doesn't have to wait for the Finance Bill."

Inheritance tax is charged at 40 per cent on everything over £25,000 of an estate. The hardest hit are middle-class homeowners who do not have much in the way of other assets but who have seen the



Some people used the loophole of buying a farm property to avoid inheritance tax

value of their homes rise above the threshold. So how can one avoid IHT but remain within the existing rules?

GIFTS

THE commonest form of protecting your assets from IHT is by making gifts while alive through a Potentially Exempt Transfer. Gifts are free from IHT as long as the person making the gift does not die within seven years. Speculation is growing that the Chancellor may revive the old capital transfer tax provisions, abolished in 1986, whereby all gifts are added up and made liable for IHT if the total exceeds the IHT threshold.

Don't imagine, however, that you can give your house to your children and continue to live in it to avoid future IHT. This is treated by the Revenue as a "gift with reservation" and is liable for IHT.

VARIATION

A DEED of variation is a little-known rule that allows a will to be rewritten if all the beneficiaries agree within two years of the death. Tax specialists have used this to revise wills which were poorly written from an IHT perspective.

For example, a man leaves his wife £500,000 in his will. Married partners are exempt from IHT, so no tax is paid.

But she then dies a year later, and her children are left the £500,000 - and a £114,000 tax bill on the estate. Using a deed of variation, the will is rewritten so that the £500,000 left to the wife changes to £215,000, and the balance is paid into a discretionary trust for the children. On her death, her estate is not taxed as it does not exceed the IHT threshold, while the children's £285,000 trust faces a tax bill of only £28,000. By rewriting the will, the children cut the inheritance tax bill by £86,000.

John Pottage, tax director at Coopers & Lybrand, the accountant, said he would not be surprised if deeds of variation are dealt a blow. "It is like having your cake and eating it," he said. But until then, beneficiaries may continue to exploit the rule, which highlights the importance of maximising use of IHT allowances in writing a will.

PROPERTY

BUSINESS and agricultural property is exempt from IHT. This has led to people buying farms to escape tax, and at the least Labour is expected to cut the relief, taking it from 100 per cent to, say, 50 per cent. Sideslipping a cut in relief will be difficult, Mr Pottage said: "As with potential changes to the rules on gifts, accelerate gifts of such assets."

PENSIONS

Most people have a pension in the form of an annuity. Commonly, when an annuitant dies, the wife or husband will receive 50 per cent of the annuity, but on his or her death, the annuity disappears and cannot be passed on to the children. However, if a pensioner chooses the new (and complex) option of an income drawdown, then the pension can be passed on to heirs if the pensioner dies before 75.

Roddy Kohn of Kohn Cougar, the financial adviser, said: "Part of a pension fund can be written under trust for the benefit of children, allowing the money to be isolated from IHT." There is speculation that the Chancellor will clamp down hard on the use of trusts to avoid tax but Mr Kohn, a member of the Personal Investment Authority board, said: "Offshore trusts and bonds are the types of things I expect to come under scrutiny. But there are plenty of trusts for legitimate transactions which should survive."

Inheritance tax raises just 0.5 per cent of government income. There have been hints of a radical overhaul and the Institute of Fiscal Studies expects a clampdown, underlining the message that if you are planning to make a gift to your children, do it now rather than later.

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سجدة من الاطفال

Put £10,000 into the Hali-fax and the best it can guarantee is a return of £12,672 in four years. Put the same amount in a guaranteed-income bond and the return is £500 higher. Guaranteed-income bonds (Gibs) are the forgotten corner of the UK savings market, yet one specialist said they offer "far and above what you can get in a building society".

One reason for their relative obscurity is that only a few companies offer Gibs, and because they pay very little commission (usually £50 or less), financial advisers are not very interested in selling them. Another reason is the severe penalties if you want to withdraw money before the end of the specified term. Colin Jackson, of Baronworth Investment Services, a Gib specialist, gave a warning: "This has to be money that you don't need, not money you might need."

Here we explain the advantages and disadvantages of Gibs.

Q What exactly is a guaranteed-income bond?

A A Gib is a lump-sum investment (the standard minimum is £1,000) which provides a regular, guaranteed fixed income over a period chosen by the investor, from one to five years. At the end of the period, the investor receives his capital back.

Q What interest rate do the bonds offer?

A Rates rise and fall, influenced by movements in base rates and expectations about future interest rates. According to *Moneyfacts*, rates are currently about 6 per cent for investments over one year, rising to 7 per cent per year if the money is locked away for 4-5 years. The more invested, the higher the rate.

Q How often are interest payments made?

A Depositors can choose monthly or annual payments, or the interest can be rolled up in the fund. Interest rates paid on monthly distribution is slightly less than if interest is taken annually.

Q How can the bonds offer more than a building society or bank deposit?

A Gibs are offered by spe-

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Savers need to tread a fine line between risk and reward

cialist life insurance companies, usually subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies, with start-up costs higher than initial income, allowing them to defer tax and offer higher rates. The Government is reviewing policyholder taxation, but according to the Association of British Insurers, existing contracts will almost certainly be honoured.

Q How much do I pay in fees and commission?

A Like building societies, the charges are taken into account in the interest rate offered. Standard commission is 0.5 per cent. Chartwell Investment Management

(01225 446556) rebates commission to enhance returns, though it charges a £25 fee.

Q How secure is the income and capital?

A The insurance company is the guarantor, but it is backed by third-party underwriting. For example, a recent GE Financial Services Gib was backed by an HSBC bond. GE Financial Services is part of General Electric, the world's largest company, and HSBC is the largest quoted bank in the United Kingdom. In the event of both of these guarantors failing, a highly unlikely scenario, then the Gib holder is protected by the Poli-

cyholders' Protection Act, which will repay 90 per cent of the investment.

Q Do I pay tax on the income from a Gib?

A Not if you pay basic-rate tax, which is one of the Gib's main advantages. However, higher-rate taxpayers must declare the income and may be liable for tax.

Q What happens if I am a non-taxpayer?

A Bad news. Non-taxpayers cannot reclaim the basic-rate tax that is paid by the life company, making Gibs less attractive than building society accounts.

Q What happens if I want to withdraw the money before the end of the predetermined period?

A You may not get back the full amount invested. The sum repaid varies from one provider to another, but is usually 5-10 per cent less than the original investment.

Q If I die before the Gib matures, what happens?

A The capital will be returned, says Chase de Vere Investments, but the interest repaid will depend on the company's terms.

Q Are there any other disadvantages to Gibs?

A Ananda Davidson of Holden Meehan, the financial adviser, gave warning: "You can be stuck in a rate that is uncompetitive as interest rates rise. It can be like getting caught in the wrong fixed-rate mortgage. However, I do have a client who fixed into a Gib at 11 per cent a few years ago, and she's delighted."

Q Which companies currently market Gibs?

A The leading companies in the Gib market are AIG Life, GE Financial Assurance and Pinnacle Insurance. Several firms of independent financial advisers specialise in finding the best Gib, such as Baronworth (0181 518 1218), Chamberlin de Broe (0171 434 4222) and Chase de Vere Investments (0171 404 5766).

For guaranteed-income bond prices, see page 38

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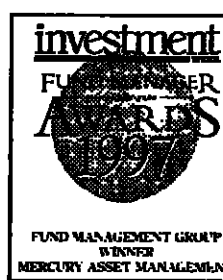
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MAM to make a move on discount

Mercury Asset Management announced this week that it was embarking on a second bid to boost the share price of its Mercury European Privatisation Trust by buying back up to 15 per cent of the fund's shares. The trust has come under the spotlight because in spite of purchasing 67.3 million MEPT shares since January last year, the trust's share price still lags behind the full value of its assets.

At present, shares in the £930 million trust are still at a 13 per cent discount to net asset value. Yesterday shares in the trust closed at 137½ p. Lough Callaghan, managing director of Mercury Investment Trusts, said the outlook for European privatisations "continues to be favourable".

Unlike the first share buy-back programme, MEPT will not be issuing preference shares to fund the buy-back of ordinary shares but will raise the cash through borrowings or by selling securities in the portfolio. The cash needed for the redemption of the preference shares will be raised through borrowings, so maintaining MEPT's gearing of 8 per cent of net assets.

The board's current policy is to limit borrowings to no more than 15 per cent of net assets. An extraordinary general meeting to approve the proposals will be held on October 14. The share price rose 4p on Thursday when the move was announced. Mercury's buy-back is the latest in a series of moves by investment trusts to try to cut discounts.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Gavin Lumsden explains why Barclays has changed its strategy

Let the computer take the strain



Aircraft cross the Atlantic using a computer program with occasional tweaks by the pilot. Barclays will run its trusts this way

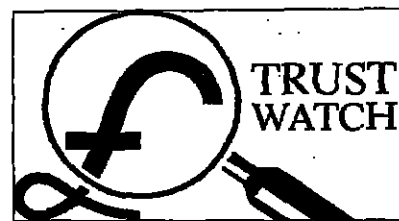
For some people life begins at 40, for others it is time for a midlife crisis. Which camp Barclays falls into is something the bank's 550,000 unit trust holders can decide on in the months to come.

Having run unit trusts since 1957, Barclays noticed it had developed a bit of a punch in the form of 29 separate funds. This week the bank announced it was going on a diet, renaming the operation Barclays Funds and reducing the range to 11 unit trusts. The move has surprised some observers. As the performance of the trusts has been, in some cases, above average, Jason Hollands of BEST Investment said: "The trusts have done better than their high street competition. Some, such as Special Situations, have performed rather well."

None of the existing Barclays funds will actually disappear, although they will all lose their Unicorn brand tag. Instead, from the end of this month, new branch customers will be offered a simpler choice of three investment portfolios: income, growth, and growth and income, a combination of both. The last two will be funds investing in five to ten of Barclays's old unit trusts. This will give investors a large spread of investments without having to do any work selecting the funds. Minimum investment will be £1,000 lump sum or £100 a month. All will be available as a Pep with no extra charge.

Managed Growth and Income will be the most conservative option, investing in bonds for income and equities for capital growth. However, it will not take risks and will keep its exposure to either asset class between 40 and 60 per cent.

Managed Growth will take a slightly riskier approach by targeting Barclays capital growth funds investing in the UK, Europe, US and Far East. The income portfolio will not invest in other funds, but like Bugbit, the popular but unfortu-



TRUST WATCH

nately named Barclays corporate bond Pep, will buy bonds and debt securities from international companies.

In spite of the extra simplicity, Barclays is not cutting its management charges. The growth and income funds will take 5.25 per cent fee off every contribution plus an annual charge of 1.5 per cent of the value of the holdings. Managed Income is cheaper, taking 3.25 per cent as an initial charge and 0.75 per cent as its annual fee. There will be a similar level of charges on the eight Barclays Global Investors funds, which are only available through financial advisers.

Simultaneously the bank unveiled the new streamlined investment strategy that is supposed to keep these funds fit and their performance healthy. Puzzlingly entitled "advanced active", the new approach has led Barclays to dispense with the services of traditional active fund managers whose stockpicking skills proved far too erratic. In their place Barclays is employing teams of analysts to sit behind ranks of computers and scour the world's stock markets.

Many of these techies come from Wells Fargo, the US fund manager which Barclays bought last year. Wells Fargo pioneered the concept of index tracking in the 1970s. It argued that stock markets had become so efficient in disseminating information to investors that fund managers could no longer consistently beat the market through superior stockpicking. Stockpickers were as likely to pick

duff companies as well-run corporations. Wells Fargo's solution was to find ways of replicating indices such as the FTSE 100 which measure performance of stock markets.

Twenty years later, index tracking has found universal acceptance. However, Wells Fargo, now Barclays Global Investors, currently believes markets can be inefficient at times. Under advanced active it uses the skills it gained in index tracking to search for information no one else has spotted.

It looks for three types of signals before deciding to buy a stock. On top of the traditional means of assessing a company's value, Barclays keeps an eye on what analysts say. It has noticed that stocks tend to perform well in the months after a strong re-rating, even if it is just one analyst who has become optimistic. This is because a herd instinct among analysts means that where one person suddenly takes the lead the others are sure to follow. Thirdly, it scrutinises the trading activities of directors. Directors buying shares in their own company demonstrate confidence and can be a useful signal of the long-term direction.

Don Lusk, head of Barclays mutual funds, says the purpose of all the number-crunching is to assess every angle of an investment and to reduce risk as much as possible. "Active managers can make bets which may pay off in the long run, but in the meantime may get over-involved in a particular sector or country even when they didn't want to. The idea is to think carefully about the bets you want to do." Spoken like a true middle-aged man.

So far the bet appears to have paid off. One UK pension fund run on the Barclays approach achieved an accumulated return of 13.8 per cent, 3 per cent more than the FTSE All-share index and 50 per cent more than its rivals.

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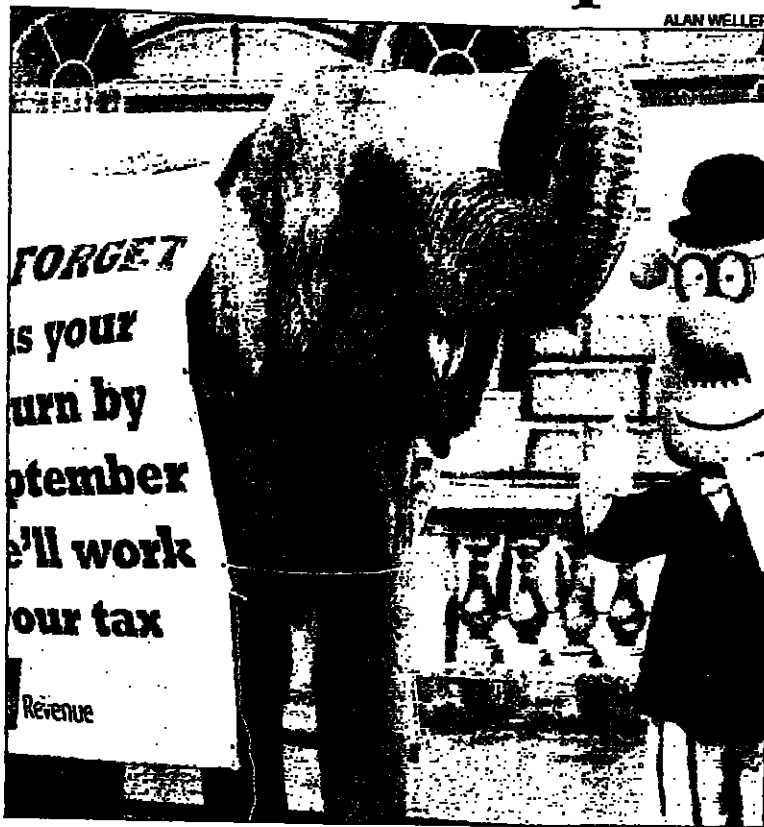
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Mammoth problem for Revenue



Double act: Rani puts her weight behind Hector's campaign

Rani, a 25-year-old elephant, and Hector, the tax inspector, have had a busy week. The former was displayed in the car park of Somerset House, as an aide memoire, for those who have forgotten to send off their self-assessment forms, while the TV and radio appearances of the latter have reached a climax, with the bowler-hatted cartoon character trying to cajole laggards into meeting the deadline of the end of this month. Beer drinkers, commuters and anyone who uses the post will also be blitzed with messages reminding them of the end of the month deadline.

More than three million people have yet to send off their self-assessment forms with only ten days to go. Those who fail to get their forms in on time will have to work out their own tax, and must return the forms by the end of January next year.

Failure to meet this second deadline will result in instant £100 fines by the Revenue. Even if only 100,000 fail to meet this second deadline, then the Revenue could stand to make about £10 million.

The Revenue is already charging 8.5 per cent interest to those who missed paying the first half of their

1996-97 tax liability by the end of January this year. About 100,000 failed to make this payment. Even if the "average payment on account" due from these 100,000 was £1,000, the Revenue could stand to make £85 million in interest on the outstanding £100 million over the year. Mintel, the independent research group, believes that the Government could reap as much as £1 billion in penalties from taxpayers under the new self-assessment rules.

The Revenue is hoping that 4.8 million people from a total of 8.5 million will meet this month's deadline. Many accountants feel that this estimate may be a little optimistic. By the middle of this week, only 3.3 million had sent their forms off to the Revenue, leaving a total of 1.5 million to deal with their forms in the next few days.

John Whiting, head of personal taxation at Price Waterhouse, said: "They are expecting quite a lot of people to send their forms off in the next two weeks."

The Revenue claims that only about 6 per cent of the forms were filled in incorrectly, although it admitted that it had received 375,000 calls on its helpline since April.

CAROLINE MERRELL

Tesco serves up a tasty 6.5%

The extremely attractive rates offered by Tesco's new savings account, launched this week, and Sainsbury's existing account are putting the building societies and banks to shame.

From Monday, customers will be able to set up a Tesco savings account which, like the Sainsbury's account, offers a rate of 6.5 per cent gross on deposits of as low as £1. Those who want a monthly income can earn 6.31 per cent. The only disadvantage of the account is a 50p fee for every withdrawal, if you exceed six withdrawals in each quarter.

Tesco says that it guarantees that its interest rates will beat the average offered on the leading high street instant-access accounts, including Ab-

Karen Zagor says the new Tesco account should make banks and societies look at their paltry rates

bey National, Barclays Instant Savers, Barclays Instant Savers, Halifax Liquid Gold, Nationwide Cash Builder and Woolwich Prime Gold.

This should not be difficult. As *The Times* reported earlier this month, most of the high street banks are paying negative real rates of interest on balances below £500. The banks and building societies can, and should, do better.

Base rates have risen four times since May, and mortgage rates have followed. Yet

among big building societies, Nationwide pays just 1.25 per cent gross on its Cashbuilder account on balances below £500. Bradford & Bingley pays 1.55 per cent on a similar deposit and Britannia pays a paltry 0.1 per cent.

The high street banks are not much better. Savers can expect to garner just 1.8 per cent gross on less than £500 in an Abbey National Instant Saver account or 1.25 per cent with a Halifax Liquid Gold account. Banks and building so-

cieties are counting on inertia preventing them from losing thousands of existing customers who could do better by moving their accounts elsewhere. Barclays has angered several *Times* readers by paying better rates on its new Instant Savings account than on its Prime account.

Financial institutions may now have an obligation to warn customers when an account becomes obsolete, but few institutions feel it is incumbent upon themselves to notify customers about better products, even when those products are their own. One *Times* reader, recently closed a Barclays Prime Account after discovering, that Barclays paid better rates on its newer Instant Savings account.

Savers have every right to be angry. A reader in Sussex has been corresponding with the Yorkshire Building Society for six months about the low interest rate on his Golden Key Account. "The observations made by the society indicate a lack of understanding by junior staff and an underestimation of customer awareness," he writes. "The society claims that there has been no 'deliberate' detuning although it states one of the factors considered when setting rates is the rates other societies are offering, and this was the reason rates were reduced twice in 1993 without an accompanying fall in either base rates or the society's mortgage rate."

Meanwhile, Tesco is likely to win more store customers with its new account. In addition to 24-hour telephone banking, the account allows customers to pay and withdraw cash at the supermarket checkout till. Customers will also be able to pay in cheques by post and set up standing orders and direct debits.

The account comes with a savings card to use on Royal Bank of Scotland and Tesco cash machines. From November, the card will also work with Link network machines. Customers can pick up a leaflet to set up an account at any Tesco store from Monday. Those who open an account before December 31 and maintain an average balance of £500 for the first three months will receive a bonus of 1,000 Clubcard shopping points.

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Conal Gregory takes a walk around the garden

The British love of gardening has branched out into a passion for garden statuary. Collectors are harking back to the 18th century when a garden was considered incomplete without its complement of classical statues, urns and fountains. We report on the trends and prices in this growing market in the latest of our series on collectables.

Among garden statuary collectors, antique benches, fountains, figures and sundials are currently some of the most appealing items. But there are also buyers for gnomes. Dolf Sweerts de Landas, of Dunsborough Park, near Ripley, Surrey, one of the leading dealers in the field, currently has on sale an early 20th century gnome, modelled on Sir Geoffrey Hudson, a courtier of Charles II.

There is considerable demand for white marble figures. Christie's, the fine art house, sold several 19th century examples in February. Figures of Minerva and Athena made £23,000, against an estimate £15,000-£20,000 while four Italian marble statues of Pandora, Hebe, Flora and Venus fetched £100,500, three times the estimate.

If your pocket does not stretch to marble, then artificial limestone is cheaper. Mr Sweerts de Landas believes that statuary by Austin & Seeley is undervalued. Made in artificial limestone from 1836 onwards, it can be found at country sales.

Sundials are also very much sought after today. Bonhams, the auction house, sold a George III bronze circular plate dated 1798 and signed S. Peacock for £1,150 in May against an estimate of £600-£800. In March it sold a Scottish sandstone sundial pedestal from the late 19th century in the style of the Arts and Crafts movement, for £414. Next Thursday Bonhams will offer a 1705 bronze plate, calibrated with the hours, minutes and compass points, on a composition stone support, estimated at £1,700-£2,000.

But before you rush to adorn your lawns with pieces from any era, you must be prepared to make another investment in 20th century security. Garden statuary enthusiasts must limit access to their plots and fit their pieces with radio alarms which are activated when the statue is shaken.

Some equip their garden gates with mercury-tilt switches connected to transmitters within the house. Other collectors

Why not splash out on an antique fountain?



tors install vibration sensors in their lawns. Besides keeping thieves at bay, you must also keep an eye out for fakes. Watch for items that are uniformly discoloured by water. It probably means a

modern piece that has been placed in salt or seawater to look artificially old.

Avoiding the counterfeit, you should go for top quality and rare patterns, wherever possible, checking the item in

one of the design catalogues, such as J.P. White, Austin & Seeley, Doulton and Val D'Osne. The classic garden statuary textbooks are *Garden Ornament* by Gertrude Jekyll (reproduced by the Antique Collectors Club £35) and *Antiques from the Garden* by Alistair Morris (Garden Art Press £25).

Coalbrookdale is a good name to look for in cast-iron seats and fountains from the 1870s. On Tuesday at Billingshurst, its Sussex salesrooms, Sotheby's the auctioneer puts on sale a Coalbrookdale fountain, a shallow bowl supporting a figure of a falconer holding a bird of prey and a duck, supported on three swans, measuring 53in (134cm) high. It is expected to make £3,000, against £1,500-£2,000 five years ago.

The pattern used in a piece can significantly influence the price realised. A year ago Sotheby's sold a Coalbrookdale passion-flower seat for £10,120 but a lily of the valley decoration, which is more often found, fetched only £3,220. The most common is the fern and blackberry design, which made £2,070 — up from £500 five years ago.

Size is also a factor, with smaller pieces preferred, as dealers often sell them to designers to decorate small gardens in town or increasingly for display inside a large conservatory.

Even though antique statuary and garden furniture is most sought after, modern pieces do come under the hammer. Two semi-circular wrought iron sections which join to form a tree seat can be compared: A modern one might make £3,000 while an early 19th century example can sell for almost double. One way to tell is to look for reeded slats, which are usually bevelled today.

Stone seats with good carving — such as sprays of trailing foliage with flowerheads and rope-twist borders — are a rising market. Typically, a 19th century Bath stone example can be £4,000-£5,000, up from £2,000-£3,000 in the early 1990s.

A large 19th century Portland stone seat with mask head and seated lions has jumped from £10,000-£15,000 to £20,000-£25,000 today over the same period.

If the carver is known, the piece commands a distinct premium — such as a half-length figure of the god, *Sunna*, by Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770), which sold for £133,500 at Christie's last month (estimated at £40,000 to £60,000).

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□ The Retirement Handbook aims to help those on the point of retirement or who have just retired by providing practical advice for the years ahead. The handbook includes a section on managing money, tackling issues such as pensions and investments, and making a will. Other chapters cover housing options and support for bereaved families, and earning money in retirement. Send a cheque for £7.99 to Age Concern England, Astral House, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER.

□ Leeds & Holbeck Building Society has raised interest rates on its investment ac-

counts by an average of 0.25 per cent, with effect from Tuesday.

□ A guide has been published by Shelter, the housing charity, informing people of their housing rights and offering answers to the most common housing problems. The *Housing Rights Guide* covers subjects such as choosing a mortgage and dealing with a homeowner, the rights of people renting privately and emergency housing help. Available from bookshops, priced £12.95 or direct from Shelter, 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9HU (add £1 to cover postage).

□ More than 5,000 active private and professional investors use Company REFS, the investment information service compiled and published by Hemmington Scott. A CD edition has been launched this week, which will enable investors to do customised searches across the whole of the UK market and have access to financial data and broker forecasts. For a demonstration copy, call 0171-278 7169.

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20,000	GE Fin Assur	6.55
50,000	GE Fin Assur	6.65
3 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.80
10,000	ITT London & Ed	6.58
50,000	GE Fin Assur	6.68
4 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.80
3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.35
5 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.95
3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.70

Source: Chamberlain de Broe 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available. *Limited edition.

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Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sainsbury's Bank 0500 405080	Inst Access	Instant	£1	6.50 Y/y
Scottish Widows Bank 0345 828829	Inst Access	Postal	£500	6.85 Y/y
C&G 0800 742437	Inst Transfer	Instant	£1,000	7.00 Y/y
Alliance & Leicester 0845 808 8860	First Cts Inst	Postal	£1,000	7.50 Y/y

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0500 225777	Albion 30	30 day p	£10,000	7.15 Y/y
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0500 225777	Post-Net 40	40 day p	£5,000	7.30 Y/y
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	60 Day Inst	60 day p	£10,000	7.60 Y/y
Hanley Economic BS 0800 838811	Postal 90	90 day p	£25,000	7.70 Y/y

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Principality BS 01222 344188	5 year	£2,500	7.65 Y/y	
Hanley Economic BS 0800 838811	5 year	£500	7.60 Y/y	
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	5 year	£3,000	7.60 Y/y	
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Premier+feeder	5 year	£9,000	7.55 Y/y

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.64%
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829400	Base rate linked M/V	1.00%

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Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01682 500 677)

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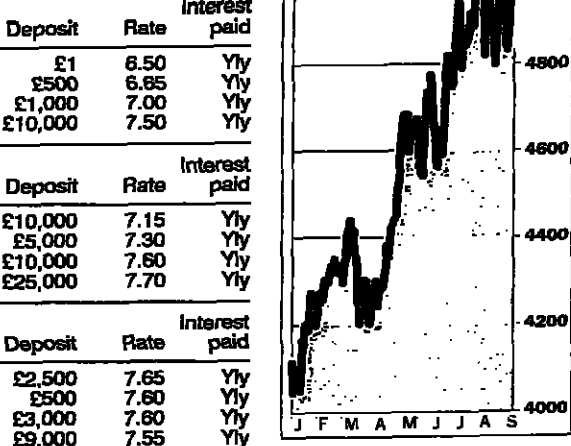
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Bradford & Bingley	11.825%	150.42	7.72%	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	168.13	7.73%	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	168.69	7.72%	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	157.83	7.84%	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	149.73	7.84%	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	173.62	7.70%	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	138.37	7.72%	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.825%	163.30	7.73%	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.825%	162.47	7.77%	100.14	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	167.16	7.70%	100.48	1,000

FLOATING RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (30/09-27/03) 9.04063%		119.00	100.00	1,000	
First Nat (22/05-20/03) 9.12031%		105.00	100.00	1,000	

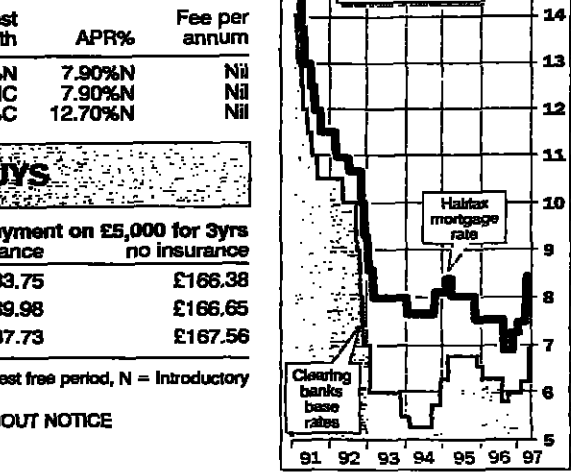
PIBS = Permanent Interest-bearing Shares. Source: ABN AMRO Home Growth - 0171 601 0101



FTSE 100 PRICE INDEX



BASE RATES V. MORTGAGES



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies	5.39	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 1.8.99
Chesapeake	5.39	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 1.8.99
0800 251291				
Northern Rock	5.24	£250k	90	Fixed to 1.1.00
0800 581500				
Bradford & Bingley	5.60	£15k+	85	Disc of 2.10% for 2 years
0800 570800				
Bank of Ireland	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed - 6 mths, 3% disc-6 mths
01189 510100				
Bristol & West	2.90	no max	90	Fixed to 1.9.98
01179 792222				

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies	0.75	£25-150k	75	Fixed at 0.75% to 31.1.98
Nottingham Imper.				
0115 9817220				
Leeds & Holbeck	0.89	£100k	95	7% disc-6 mths, 1% disc-12 mths
0113 225 7777				
Scarborough	1.20	£30-100k	95	6.99% disc-6 mth 2% disc-6mth, 0.5% 1y
0990 131419				
Bank of Ireland	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mth 3% disc-6 mth
01189 510100				
Bristol & West	2.90	no max	90	Fixed to 1.9.98
01179 792222				

NATIONAL SAVINGS

Rate	At tax rate 20%	At tax rate 40%	Minimum investment	Notes	Contact	
Ordinary A/c*	1.50	1.20	0.90	10-10,000**	0845 645000	
Investment A/c*	4.75	3.80	2.85	20-500***	0845 645000	
Income Bond*	6.50	5.20	3,900-20,000**	1mth	0845 645000	
First Opt Bond	6.25	5.00	3,751-100,000**	1mth	0845 645000	
44th issue Certifs	5.25	4.25	100-10,000	1mth	0845 645000	
Children's Bonds	6.75	5.25	25-1,000	1mth	0845 645000	
Gen Ext Rate	3.51	2.81	100-250,000	6day	0845 645000	
Capital Bonds	6.65	5.32	3.99	100-10,000	0845 645000	
11th Ind Linkeds	2.75	2.25	500-50,000	60day	0845 645000	
Pensions Bond S3	7.00	5.60	4.20	500-50,000	60day	0845 645000

* net CU (240) of net tax rate
** Rates gross and v.les. Guaranteed when held for 5 years
*** Investment of £20,000 = £10,000 in 100 shares in 10p shares and 10 S2 holdings
* Taxable

* First £10,000 of A/c for tax free, rest goes for up to £100. ** Unlimited additional savings for new investors. *** For new investors only. * Rates apply to new investors only. ** Rates apply to new investors only. *** Rates apply to new investors only.

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual monthly (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Equitable Lf.....Level	£9,534	£10,462	£11,875
Canada Life.....Level	£9,367	£10,446	£11,828
Sun Lf of Can.....Level	£9,359	£10,412	£11,846
General.....Level	£9,354	£10,378	£11,868
Standard Lf.....Level	£9,224	£10,316	£11,792
SINGLE LIFE	Female: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
General.....Level	£8,607	£9,618	£10,886
Prudential.....Level	£8,735	£9,603	£10,798
Canada Life.....Level	£8,653	£9,471	£10,685
Sun Lf of Can.....Level	£8,609	£9,382	£10,484
Equitable Lf.....Level	£8,585	£9,291	£10,280
JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
General.....Level	£8,225	£8,873	£9,763
Prudential.....Level	£8,313	£8,949	£9,849
Canada Life.....Level	£8,277	£8,848	£9,738
Sun Lf of Can.....Level	£8,225	£8,812	£9,547
Equitable Lf.....Level	£8,225	£8,812	£9,547

Source: Annuity Direct (0171 588 9300)

Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies	4.35	£15-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
Newbury				
01635 43676				
Manchester	2.20	£25-250k	90	6% discount 6 mth
01246 202055				
Clay City	5.25	£15-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
01246 862120				
Banks				
Bank of Ireland	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed - 6 mths, 3% disc-6 mths
01189 510100				
Halifax plc	5.45	£25-250k	95	3% disc-30.9.99, 0.5% oversw-10.04
01422 333333				

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Bay's Guide Ltd (01763 880438)

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UNIT-TRAINED INVESTMENT SERVICES

Unit	Offer	Way	Ytd	Unit	Offer	Way	Ytd	Unit	Offer	Way	Ytd	Unit	Offer	Way	Ytd
AEGION LIFE ASSURANCE															
AEGION LIFE ASSURANCE, Edinburgh, EH1 5RZ															
North American	581.40	581.30	+1.00	North American	581.40	581.30	+1.00	North American	581.40	581.30	+1.00	North American	581.40	581.30	+1.00
UK Equity	70.40	70.40	+1.00	UK Equity	70.40	70.40	+1.00	UK Equity	70.40	70.40	+1.00	UK Equity	70.40	70.40	+1.00
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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Myths of gambling on Premium Bonds

From Mr Richard Clarke
Sir, Regarding the letter from Alan Ingram (where are the monthly prizes from my 20,000 Premium Bonds? Weekend Money Letters, September 13). While Mr Ingram has read the National Savings booklet where it indicates that on average a holder of 20,000 bonds could expect to win 13 prizes per year of £50 and

£100, nowhere does it indicate that this will happen to every holder of this quantity of bonds. The question of whether a bondholder holds their bonds in blocks is also a red herring and does not affect your odds of winning.

Each bondholder effectively gambles the interest that they would earn in a bank or building society with the prospect of

winning the top prize of £1 million and many hundreds of thousands of smaller prizes. If a bondholder does not feel he is getting value for money he is always entitled to withdraw his bonds and invest the proceeds elsewhere.

When purchasing Premium Bonds one has to question why it is you do this. If you want a guaranteed gain then Premium Bonds are not for you. If on the other hand you would like a chance at winning the top prize with no loss

of capital (other than the reduction by inflation) then Premium Bonds could be the right choice for you.

As always, if you are unsure about investment products, you should consult a professional adviser on these matters to assess the correct choice for your investment goals. Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CLARKE,
30 Cardiff Street,
Rhondda Cynon Taff,
South Wales.

THE WEEK IN MONEY

A study of the UK life insurance industry has revealed that mutual insurance companies are more cost-effective than their quoted rivals. Fox-Pitt Kelton, the broker, finds Equitable Life to be the most efficient operator.

□ The Treasury announced on Wednesday that NewRo, the City regulator due to be introduced next year, is to be empowered by a single reform Bill that will sweep away the vast array of financial services legislation. Instead of amending the existing legislation, laws such as the Building Societies Act will, where possible, be repealed and replaced with a single Act.

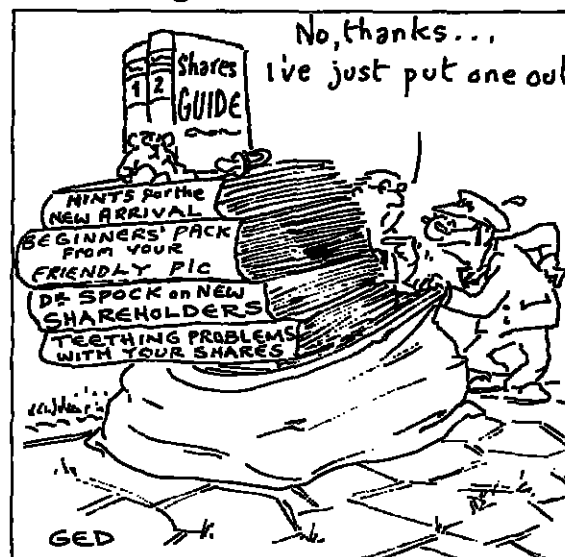
□ First National, the Irish Republic's largest building

society, is to become a bank, distributing free shares to 220,000 members. Analysts estimate that individual windfalls will be on average, £1,800. The society should float within 18 to 24 months and will be listed on the Stock Exchanges of London and Dublin.

□ Britannia Assurance disclosed on Wednesday that it had set aside £150 million to compensate investors who were mis-sold personal pensions. 174 full-time staff will work on the 13,500 priority cases it has identified.

□ An increasing number of product warranties are leaving consumers unprotected if a manufacturer or retailer goes under, according to Domestic & General, the insurer.

Drowning on the waves of Crest



From Mrs P. Lumsden
Sir, Recently my husband and I have been inundated with, and our postman overloaded by, huge "information packs" welcoming us as new shareholders in ples of which we have been shareholders for many years. Presumably this is because we have recently had our share certificates dematerialised on joining Crest. This inundation is an incredible waste of time, material and

money and surely could be avoided by someone pressing a few computer keys to see if our names were listed as shareholders. I suppose it is reassuring to the extent that we, ourselves, as shareholders have not been dematerialised - we just hope the whole system does not become Crest-fallen! Yours faithfully,
PAMELA LUMSDEN,
16A Merchiston Crescent,
Edinburgh.

CGT ALLOWANCES - AUGUST 1997

The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in August 1997

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
January	0.919	0.825	0.738	0.647	0.585	0.534	0.428	
February	0.910	0.818	0.734	0.641	0.579	0.528	0.418	
March	0.905	0.812	0.728	0.635	0.573	0.523	0.411	
April	0.898	0.805	0.721	0.628	0.566	0.516	0.404	
May	0.892	0.799	0.715	0.622	0.560	0.510	0.398	
June	0.886	0.793	0.709	0.616	0.554	0.504	0.392	
July	0.880	0.787	0.703	0.610	0.548	0.498	0.386	
August	0.874	0.781	0.697	0.604	0.542	0.492	0.380	
September	0.868	0.775	0.691	0.598	0.536	0.486	0.374	
October	0.862	0.769	0.685	0.592	0.530	0.480	0.368	
November	0.856	0.763	0.679	0.586	0.524	0.474	0.362	
December	0.850	0.757	0.673	0.580	0.518	0.468	0.356	
1990	0.844	0.751	0.667	0.574	0.512	0.462	0.350	
1991	0.838	0.745	0.661	0.568	0.506	0.456	0.344	
1992	0.832	0.739	0.655	0.562	0.500	0.450	0.338	
1993	0.826	0.733	0.649	0.556	0.494	0.444	0.332	
1994	0.820	0.727	0.643	0.550	0.488	0.438	0.326	
1995	0.814	0.721	0.637	0.544	0.482	0.432	0.320	
1996	0.808	0.715	0.631	0.538	0.476	0.426	0.314	
1997	0.802	0.709	0.625	0.532	0.470	0.420	0.308	

The 12 month period for disposals by individuals on or after April 6, 1985 (April 1, 1985 for companies) is the month in which the allowable expenditure was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month.

DIRECT LINE RATES

SAVINGS RATES	
Direct Line Instant Access Account	
BALANCE	ANNUAL GROSS RATE
£1-£1,999	5.50%
£2,000-£9,999	5.70%
£10,000-£24,999	5.85%
£25,000-£49,999	6.00%
£50,000-£99,999	6.25%
£100,000+	6.50%
MORTGAGE RATE	
Direct Line Standard Variable Mortgage Rate	
VARIABLE RATE	APR
2.50%	7.25%

All rates correct as 8th September 1997.



DIRECT LINE
Financial Services

0181 649 9099 MORTGAGES
0181 667 1121 SAVINGS

Source: Direct Line Financial Services. For further information about either of the Direct Line products listed above, please phone the appropriate number above quoting ref. TTBB23

Mortgages and savings provided by Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5TH. For savings, deposits and withdrawals via your bank account - allow 3 working days. The gross rate is the rate paid without deduction of income tax and is based on annual payments of interest. Full terms and conditions of the account are available on request. For mortgages, for security to cover the amount of the loan and security in the form of a first legal charge (standard mortgage) - normally over the property will be required. Direct Line mortgages from £2,000 to £250,000 are available for up to 25 years of the property, subject to purchase price, wherever in the UK. Wherever you live, you can get a Direct Line mortgage. All rates quoted above are variable. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. For your added security telephone calls may be recorded and the recording kept secure. Direct Line and the red telephone on which are trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc and used with its permission.

Find out why pension plans are not all the same.

Perhaps you think that all pension plans are the same. If you do, then you would be making a big mistake. Here are some of the reasons why you should consider an Equitable Pension Plan.

THE EQUITABLE LIFE:
• Pays no commission to third parties for the introduction of new business.
• Has no shareholders.

OUR PENSION PLAN:
• Lets you retire earlier or later than planned - without penalty.
• Lets you vary your contributions - without penalty.
• Provides full return of fund in the event of death before retirement.

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Information/advice will only be given on Equitable group products regulated by the Financial Services Authority. THE EQUITABLE LIFE, FREEPOST, WALTON STREET, AYLESBURY, HERTS AL1 1TB. For The Equitable Life, FREEPOST, WALTON STREET, AYLESBURY, HERTS AL1 1TB. I would welcome details on The Equitable's pension plans. I am self-employed [] I am an employee not in a company pension scheme []

NAME (Mr/Ms/Ms)
ADDRESS
Tel (Office)
Tel (Home)
Date of Birth



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£1,000 lump sum
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worldwide
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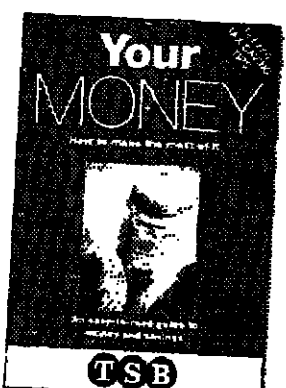
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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICES

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Equities close at low of day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	BANKS			
100	99	BANKS			
100	99	BANKS			
100	99	BANKS			
100	99	BANKS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	BREWERY, PUBS & REST			
100	99	BREWERY, PUBS & REST			
100	99	BREWERY, PUBS & REST			
100	99	BREWERY, PUBS & REST			
100	99	BREWERY, PUBS & REST			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	ELECTRICITY			
100	99	ELECTRICITY			
100	99	ELECTRICITY			
100	99	ELECTRICITY			
100	99	ELECTRICITY			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT			
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT			
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT			
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT			
100	99	ELECTRONIC & ELECT			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	HOUSEHOLD GOODS			
100	99	HOUSEHOLD GOODS			
100	99	HOUSEHOLD GOODS			
100	99	HOUSEHOLD GOODS			
100	99	HOUSEHOLD GOODS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	INSURANCE			
100	99	INSURANCE			
100	99	INSURANCE			
100	99	INSURANCE			
100	99	INSURANCE			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	INVESTMENT TRUSTS			
100	99	INVESTMENT TRUSTS			
100	99	INVESTMENT TRUSTS			
100	99	INVESTMENT TRUSTS			
100	99	INVESTMENT TRUSTS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS			
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS			
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS			
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS			
100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			
100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			
100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			
100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			
100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	HEALTHCARE			
100	99	HEALTHCARE			
100	99	HEALTHCARE			
100	99	HEALTHCARE			
100	99	HEALTHCARE			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS			
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS			
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS			
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS			
100	99	PHARMACEUTICALS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER			
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER			
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER			
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER			
100	99	PRINTING & PAPER			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	PROPERTY			
100	99	PROPERTY			
100	99	PROPERTY			
100	99	PROPERTY			
100	99	PROPERTY			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	MINING			
100	99	MINING			
100	99	MINING			
100	99	MINING			
100	99	MINING			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD			
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD			
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD			
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD			
100	99	RETAILERS, FOOD			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL			
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL			
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL			
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL			
100	99	RETAILERS, GENERAL			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	OTHER FINANCIAL			
100	99	OTHER FINANCIAL			
100	99	OTHER FINANCIAL			
100	99	OTHER FINANCIAL			
100	99	OTHER FINANCIAL			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			

THE TIMES

Portfolio

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No	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	Imperial Chemicals	Chemicals	
2	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	
3	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	
4	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	
5	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	
6	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	
7	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	
8	Wm Morrison Supermarkets	Retailers	

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Seven winners shared the prize yesterday, each receiving £2,000. They were: A. Alderson, J. Alderson, J. Alderson, J. Alderson, J. Alderson, J. Alderson, J. Alderson.

TRANSPORT

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			
100	99	TRANSPORT			

WATER

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			
100	99	WATER			

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
100	99	TELECOMMUNICATIONS			

TEXTILES & APPAREL

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			
100	99	TEXTILES & APPAREL			

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

High	Low	Company	Price	%	P/E
100	99	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET			

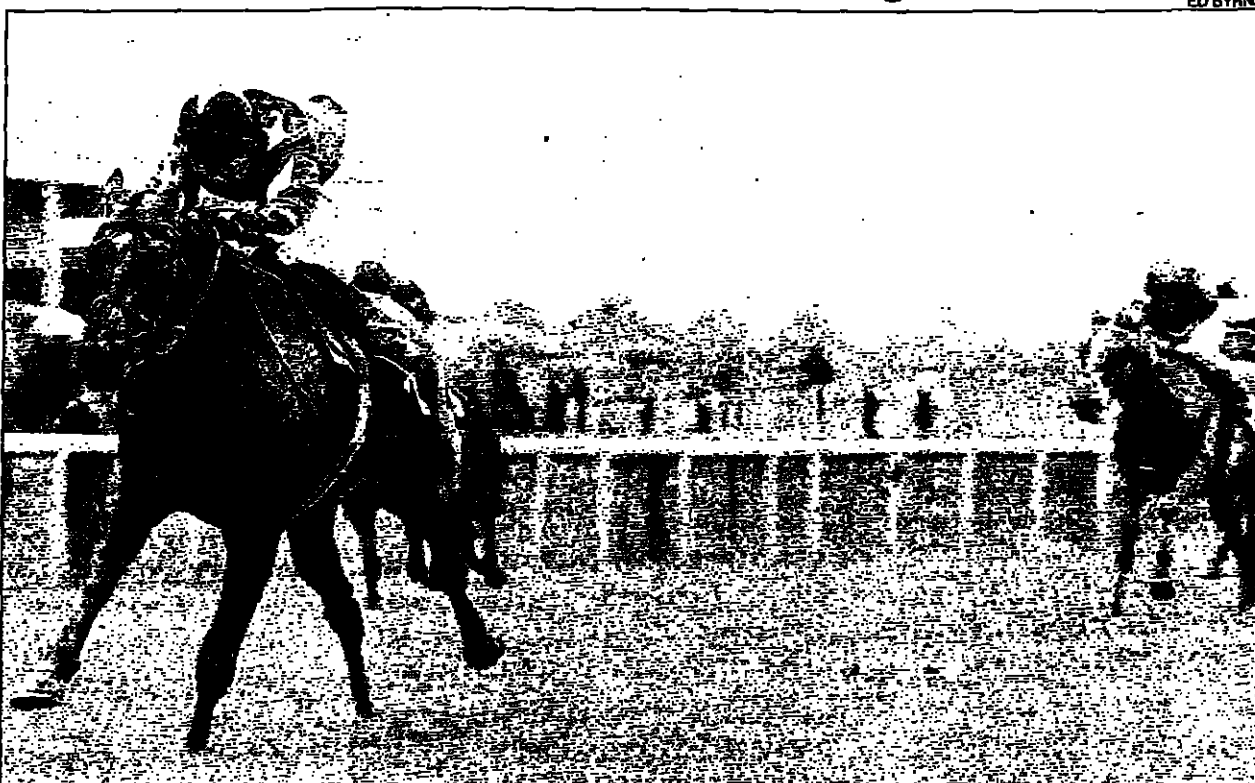
RACING: HIGH DRAW TO FAVOUR MAKIN'S CONTENDER IN COMPETITIVE AYR SPRINT

Oggi can show rivals way home

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

THROW away the form book and let the draw be your guide to finding the winner of the Ladbroke Ayr Gold Cup, the £75,000 highlight of the Western meeting this afternoon.

A quick glance at the outcome of the cavalry charge in recent years shows that Ayr's innocuous-looking straight course offers a huge advantage to those horses drawn high near the stands' rail. When Coastal Bluff came out of stall 28 a year ago and made virtually all the running to



Double Action, who won recently at York, is among the favourites for today's Ladbroke Ayr Gold Cup

RICHARD EVANS
Nap: SHARP CONSUL
(3.00 Newbury)
Next best: Ghalaas
(3.35 Ayr)

win, he was followed home by horses from stalls 29, 27 and 25.

Twelve months earlier, the first four were housed in stalls 27, 20, 28 and 26, while in 1994 and 1992 the winners came out of 29 and 28 respectively. With a breeze and warm sunshine continuing to dry out the racecourse yesterday, good ground looks assured today, which should reinforce the trend.

Walking the course before racing yesterday, there appeared to be a faster strip just off the stands' rail — and the draw for the day's feature race looks as though much of the early pace will be down the favoured side. Jack Berry, whose sprinters invariably race prominently, has three

runners in the upper half of the draw, including the best-breaking My Melody Parkes in stall 29.

With plenty of early speed, the race could play into the hands of Oggi, drawn next to My Melody Parkes. The Peter Makin-trained six-year-old loves genuinely good ground and has been a model of consistency since being gelded and having a soft palate operation last year. He has won four races inside the past 12 months — all in fields —

but arguably recorded his best effort when third to Riffat at Goodwood four weeks ago. That performance was particularly praiseworthy as Oggi came clear of those racing with him on the unfavourable stands' side.

Before the draw was announced, Sharp had been my strong favourite. The improving three-year-old bounced back to his best when chasing home Dashing Blue in the Portland Handicap at Doncaster and Richard Hannan's

runner will love this ground. However, he is drawn in No Man's Land, towards the middle of the track, and it would be no surprise if Bold Edder, fourth in the Doncaster sprint, reverses the form from his high draw.

Should the draw bias favour low horses — as it did consistently in the late 1980s — Gaelic Storm would hold sound claims, having won at Epsom 28 days ago when racing down the slowest part of the track in the centre. The

step up to six furlongs should suit. Double Action, whose dam, Final Shot, won this race in 1990, also enters calculations after his runaway victory in the mud at York last time.

Of the rest, Emerging Market, winner of the Wokingham Handicap in 1996, is back on a fair handicap mark and will relish threading his way through this big field, while Passion For Life is well treated on his form early last year — and is racing over his best trip.

Arkadian Hero poised to complete treble

NEWBURY
BBC1

2.00: Bina Rosie is not the most straightforward ride, but has at least been in better recent form than his rivals. He won an even worse race at Chesham last time, but previously looked as good as ever when second to Decorated Hero here. Musical Fur showed no sign of retrieving his smart juvenile form (Dewhurst second) on his return from a break last time. Fatefully would also have every chance if at her best, but has never run on easy ground.

2.30: Banningham Blade deserves a medal, but Arkadian Hero looks impregnable on the book, having routed his field at Ripon last time — an effort since complemented by subsequent wins for Land Of Dreams (albeit over five furlongs) and Milana (who responds on 3lb better terms for four lengths). The ground was much faster that day, but this sturdy-built colt has a rounded action, and should be suited by some cut. If he is too short, punters can consider Jimmy Tox, improved on the soft at Chester last time.

3.00: Grief merits close attention in a tight handicap. Denied only in a photo-finish after storming up the Sandown hill last time, he handles the mud. Hajr is also progressing, but unproven on the ground. Lomberto is well treated on his best, while last year's winner, Game Play, is certainly game. But



perhaps the value is Ball Gown. Second in this two years ago, she loves soft ground and is only 3lb higher than when romping home at Newmarket last year.

3.30: Darapour will improve further for the additional test here, having finished clear of the fourth when staying on at the Ebor meeting, whereas Beauchamp Jade (tracks too sharp last time) has raced principally on top. Debutante Days has gone up a stone in running up a sequence in modest races, while Russian Rose and Jazz King prefer faster going.

CHRIS McGRATH

AYR
CHANNEL 4

3.05: If my theory about the benefit of a high draw prevails, Perryton View must hold strong claims from stall 28. On his seasonal reappearance he won a competitive sprint at Newmarket and led home several subsequent winners. After two disappointing efforts, Peter

Calver's runner did well from a poor draw at York last time. Significantly, a visitor is fitted today. Almost goes well for Jo Humman. Of those drawn low, Benzoe has the best claims.

3.35: River Sky finished five lengths adrift of Sandrom Chambray on his belated seasonal reappearance at Epsom and should finish closer this time. If the ground had remained soft, Winter Romance would hold the call. The Cadeaux Genereux colt needs the mud to be seen to best effect, as he showed when beating West-A Minute at York. However, I just prefer Ghalaas, who recorded a career-best effort when finishing fourth in Annus Mirabilis in a group three race at Windsor last time. Sacho overcame a 16-month absence to win a Leicester maiden 11 days ago and is open to improvement.

4.15: see left

4.45: Kennemara Star needs to win here to ensure getting into the Cambridge Cup. The winner of an Ascot nursery last term, has taken time to find his form this season but ran well behind Sharn at Sandown recently.

RICHARD EVANS

NEWBURY

THUNDERER

- 2.00 Pantree House
2.30 Bold Edge
3.00 Eden Heights

GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

Raced number Draw in brackets. S—strong form (F—fair), P—poor, U—uncertain, B—brought down, D—dropped, R—retired, U—unsound, J—jumps, F—flat, H—horses, V—veteran, M—Maiden, E—Epsom, C—course record, D—drawn, W—winner, L—lost, N—no race, G—gone, S—sold, T—tired, O—other.

GOING: SOFT
DRAW: 5F-6F, LOW NUMBERS BEST

3.30 TOTE BOOKMAKERS AUTUMN CUP

(Handicap: 1m 51yd) (14 runners)

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Back from the brink: the making of Lawrence Dallaglio, who joins *The Times* rugby team next week

Model professional happy to strut the captaincy catwalk

The planes of Lawrence Dallaglio's face are flat and hard, carved there by nature and defined by family sorrow. But the eyes above are humorous, there is purpose in the stride and a natural courtesy: the cocktail is one that, added to his talent for playing rugby union, suggests a man rapidly finding his way in a turbulent sporting world.

Will the path lead to the England captaincy? That decision has yet to be made by a management team only beginning itself in this week, but Lawrence Bruno Nero Dallaglio has heard the suggestion so many times that he has grown philosophical about the prospect — well, as philosophical as the product of an Italian father and an Anglo-Irish mother can be.

If, at 25, Dallaglio represents the model professional player, he leaves no doubt of the value he places upon rugby, which, for a prolonged period of his life, represented a crutch, a pool into which he could slip and slough off care. It was not always so. Growing up in London, he identified primarily with football clubs and will still watch Chelsea whenever he has the chance. Born in Shepherd's Bush, he was the boy at the kickabout, the streetwise kid accustomed as a seven-year-old to making his own way to school and back.

That Wasps, the club he has led with such distinction for the past two years, now play at Loftus Road represents a wheel turning, since that is only a mile from his birthplace and a reminder of his affection for football. Juventus was the team that his father, Vincenzo, followed when he lived in Turin, but the young Dallaglio had friends who encouraged him to travel to Staines to play mini-rugby for five years.

Perhaps there have been two turning-points in his life. The first came when, as a 13-year-old, his parents sent him (travelling alone) to Ampleforth and he found himself amid that splendid Yorkshire isolation, looking down the valley over a sea of rugby pitches. "It was a bitter pill to swallow," Dallaglio said. "I guessed I wouldn't be doing much kicking around there."

"At the time I found the change difficult to take. May-

be I had had too much independence — London is like that, if you want to do something different you can just go out and do it. Ampleforth was a culture shock — 13 weeks at a time in that self-contained atmosphere was so unlike anything I had known before."

However, Vincenzo and Eileen Dallaglio, making the financial sacrifices that so many parents do, wanted to send their son to one of the country's leading Catholic schools and were helped by the success of their other child, Francesca, in winning a scholarship to ballet school.

Francesca Dallaglio died, only 19, when the pleasure boat, *Marchioness*, sank on the River Thames in 1989, ten days after her brother's seventeenth birthday. "She started dancing when she was five and it was clear she had talent," Dallaglio said. "Initially the tragedy tore us apart. I look round sometimes and see families in England who only seem to come together at times of great sadness."

"With us it was the other way round. We were a very close-knit family, with strong family values. Coming from Italian stock that's no surprise, but the accident tore at the heart of what was dear to us. It was very difficult to come to terms with."

Dallaglio has told the same tale frequently enough now, but there is nothing trite or sentimental in his memory. The finality of death completely eroded a comfortable world and for two years he was, in his own words, "on another planet."

He left Ampleforth a year early, struggled to take his A levels at tutorial college and did not distinguish himself. There was no focus to his life and, while his mother threw herself into a lengthy campaign for a public inquiry into the tragedy, Dallaglio found his own way out through sport.

Ampleforth had lit the flame. He played wing and fly half before he shot up to 6ft 4in and switched to No 8. He played in an outstanding first XV alongside the likes of Richard Booth and Patrick Bingham, backs who toured Australia with England Schools in 1988 with Martin Johnson, Damian Hopley and Adedayo Adebayo.

Success in the national schools sevens at Roehampton in 1989, when Ampleforth won the open and the festival tournaments, was cherished, but it was on a murky Wednesday evening that he found himself playing for North of England schools against Middlesex at Sudbury. Wasps took an interest in the youngster and when, after his sister's death, Dallaglio needed to find a path, the North London club offered him a place.

The family home was in Barnes and Rosslyn Park or Harlequins would have been nearer, but Wasps "had made me feel a bit special. They were a warm club with family values and it was important they didn't know much about me or my background. I had to find a way of doing well for myself."

"My plan was to lead by example"

Religion helped, too, if not in the formal sense. Dallaglio accepted the strong beliefs of his parents, absorbed the principles to which he was exposed at Ampleforth and translated the values they established into sport. "You develop your own beliefs as you grow older, core values which can be applied in almost any circumstances," he said. "Our's wasn't a large family and we had to pull together, but it taught me a harsh lesson. Everyone has some cross to bear, but our's came a lot earlier than expected."

Dallaglio joined Wasps in 1990, just another youngster who hoped to crack the first

DAVID HANDS



schools sevens at Roehampton in 1989, when Ampleforth won the open and the festival tournaments, was cherished, but it was on a murky Wednesday evening that he found himself playing for North of England schools against Middlesex at Sudbury. Wasps took an interest in the youngster and when, after his sister's death, Dallaglio needed to find a path, the North London club offered him a place.

The family home was in Barnes and Rosslyn Park or Harlequins would have been nearer, but Wasps "had made me feel a bit special. They were a warm club with family values and it was important they didn't know much about me or my background. I had to find a way of doing well for myself."

"My plan was to lead by example"

Religion helped, too, if not in the formal sense. Dallaglio accepted the strong beliefs of his parents, absorbed the principles to which he was exposed at Ampleforth and translated the values they established into sport. "You develop your own beliefs as you grow older, core values which can be applied in almost any circumstances," he said. "Our's wasn't a large family and we had to pull together, but it taught me a harsh lesson. Everyone has some cross to bear, but our's came a lot earlier than expected."

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reserve game. Iwan Evans will make his full debut after his move from Llanelli, while Adedayo Adebayo returns on the left wing for his first match since damaging a thigh in England's defeat by Argentina in the second international. Jeremy Guscott is another absentee — he has a stiff back — so Matt Perry plays at centre, allowing Mike Catt to revert to fly half.

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Pool A is wide open after

XV, never mind England. These became his river days when, with an Irish friend, he helped to refurbish a houseboat on the Thames, which became his home. "People said 'how can you do that, it's where your sister died?' But I found a lot of peace there. I felt very close to her," he said.

He started a course in urban estate management at Kingston Polytechnic but the social side of student life passed him by, such was the discipline he applied to his rugby. "The attitude I had was not that of an amateur, even though professionalism was still some way off," he said. His reward came initially through selection for the England team that won the World Cup sevens in 1993.

Jack Rowell, then the England coach, had a look at the bristling flanker on tour in South Africa in 1994, but looked elsewhere for his World Cup party the next year. It completed the making of Dallaglio. Professionalism stripped Wasps of their spine when Rob Andrew, Steve Bates and Dean Ryan were snapped up by Newcastle and Dallaglio was asked to captain the side. The first of his 12 caps followed and he has not looked back, captaining Wasps to the championship last season and playing a leading role in the British Isles' victory in South Africa in the summer.

"I'm comfortable with captaincy," he said. "My first thought was to lead by example. When times are hard, players are more likely to follow a consistent lead which generates a certain excitement and now I'm evolving, maturing as a player. I think I'm an aggressive player, you have to be because rugby is an uncompromising game. That doesn't mean breaking the laws, but it does mean having the physical presence and edge to play at the top level."

He has found personal contentment, too: the birth six months ago of a first child to him and Alice, his partner, has brought joy to Dallaglio and his parents, faithful followers of their son's career up and down Britain and on the Continent. That little Ella Francesca will be the light of the family, as well as being named after a dear sister, is understood.

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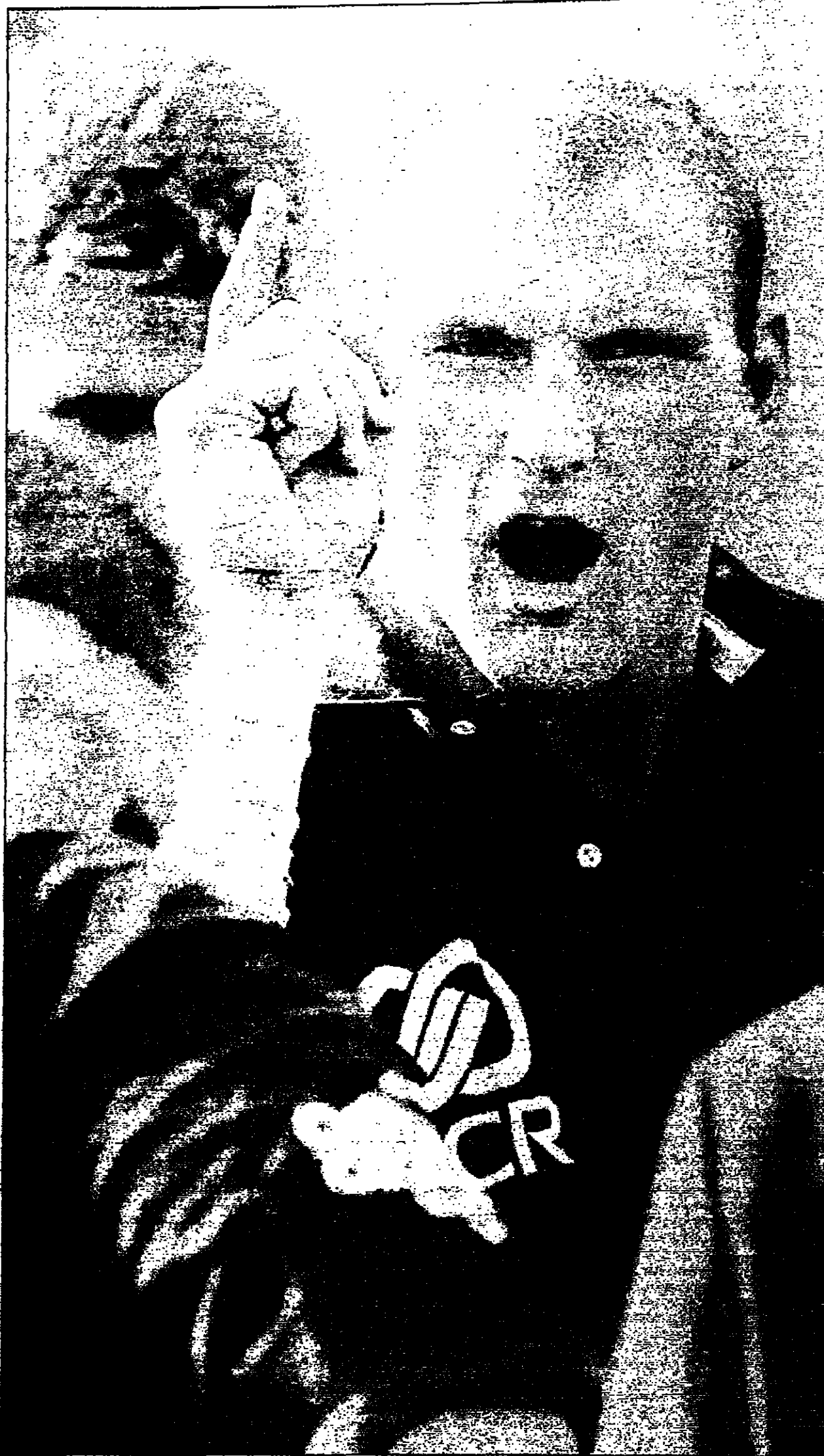
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Leader of the pack: having taken Wasps to the title, Dallaglio is on the path that could end at England's ultimate honour

RUGBY UNION

Referees warned to clamp down on violent play

BY MARK SOUSTER

AFTER the unseemly events in Brive, the game finds itself in the dock this weekend. Clubs playing in the Heineken Cup have been given a warning against violent play by Roger Pickering, the tournament director, and referees have been told to implement the letter of the law.

The fact that Brive and Pontypridd are to be dealt with by the board of the European Rugby Cup Ltd on Monday may hinder their ability to concentrate on their respective tasks against Bath and the Scottish Borders today.

Brive, who, like Bath, have won their first two matches, are reluctant visitors to what could prove the defining match in pool C. They will be missing Christophe Lamaison and Philippe Carbonneau, the France internationals who were injured in the postmatch fracas, and they are replaced by Alain Penaud and Sébastien Bonnet. David Venditti, another casualty last week, is on the bench.

For their part Bath, whose two wins have been achieved away from home, have little sympathy for Brive's attempts to have the match postponed. "At the start of this season we had a dozen internationals on the injury list and just got on with it," Phil de Glanville said. "Whoever Brive turn up with they will have strong, skilful players. We regard this as the hardest game you can have at home, hosting the European champions."

After proving his fitness in a

reserve game, Iwan Evans will make his full debut after his move from Llanelli, while Adedayo Adebayo returns on the left wing for his first match since damaging a thigh in England's defeat by Argentina in the second international. Jeremy Guscott is another absentee — he has a stiff back — so Matt Perry plays at centre, allowing Mike Catt to revert to fly half.

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RUGBY LEAGUE

Clubs step up pressure for switch to play-off system

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

MORE Super League clubs are supporting the idea of scrapping the Premiership competition and remodelling the league along Australian lines, with a top-five play-off system to determine the champions.

The end-of-season Premiership, with all 12 Super League teams taking part, has proved unpopular.

Play-offs and a grand final to determine the league champions, as opposed to the side finishing top, could find favour under the new franchise scheme planned for the Super League in 1999.

Brisbane Broncos and Cronulla Sharks meet today in the Australasian Super League final after an elimination series involving the top five clubs that some British sides would like to see imitated. "There would be some real crowd-pullers and the competition would be easier to market," Chris Caisley, the chairman of Rugby League (Europe) said. There is a predictable division of opinion between British-based Australian coaches who are leading the cause of change and several English coaches opposed to the play-off idea.

The Australian format ensures that, for a fifth-placed team to win the competition overall, they would still have to beat the four teams above them in the elimination phase, whereas interest for clubs in the British Premiership disappears after a single defeat.

Shaun McRae, St Helens' Australian coach and the new

Great Britain assistant coach, said: "The beauty of the Aussie system is that none of the top three can be eliminated in the first game. They all get a second bite of the cherry. The weakness of our Premiership is that Bradford and London, who finished first and second, have lost one match and their domestic season has finished. I think we should change our ideology."

Matthew Elliott, the Australian coach of Bradford Bulls, would go farther than McRae, who is still in favour of more than one competition.

Radically, Elliott would dispose of both the Premiership and Challenge Cup in favour of a single competition. "We won the championship with several games to spare," he said. "Of course, the players were euphoric at doing so, but it was difficult to focus properly after that. I think there should be one competition with a grand final at Wembley."

Andy Gregory, the Salford Reds coach, is opposed to change. "If you finish top of the league you should get the reward of the championship. You've deserved it."

THE TIMES

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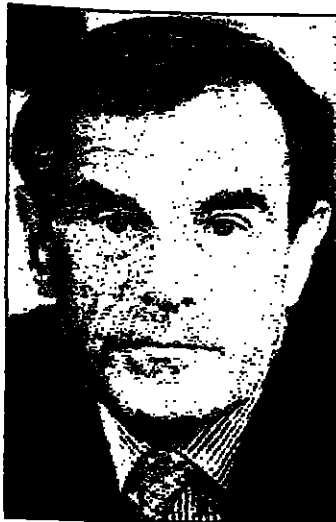
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Support of players encourages MacLaurin to bat on



Lord MacLaurin: crusade

FOUR days ago, the elected leader of English cricket awoke feeling angry and disillusioned over the rejection of his vision for the game. He was inclined to speak out and stand down. Yesterday, warmed by the sunshine of Spain and the support of this country's cricketers, Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth pledged to continue his crusade.

He will not resign as chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), but nor will he retract his support for the two-division championship proposal that the counties turned down at Lord's on Monday. He also had a warning yesterday for those who believe the game can remain unaltered, indicating that the annual hand-out on which most counties survive cannot be guaranteed.

Lord MacLaurin had gone to Spain, fulfilling his duties on the Ryder Cup Committee, uncertain if he should remain in the game that had cost him so much. He was upset, not so much by the outcome of the First Class Forum (FCF) meeting, but by its mood. "I did feel very angry afterwards," he admitted. "There was a sense that I had been wasting my time. But after a few days to think things through, I have no regrets about the way I conducted it and I am prepared to see out my term, so long as the counties still want me."

Whether Lord MacLaurin, the most progressive of recent chairmen, stands for re-election late next year remains unclear. On Tuesday he was against the idea, but I believe telephone conversations with officers of the Profes-

Alan Lee finds the ECB chairman determined to pursue his vision for the county game

sional Cricketers Association have softened his resolve. The players' support for Lord MacLaurin, and for his views, is increasingly militant.

Lord MacLaurin's diplomacy prevented him revealing details of the meeting on Monday, but I understand he was upset by certain personal comments and openly dismayed by the display of self-interest by many counties.

The chairman, it appears, opposed the inclusion among the options of an unchanged championship with a one-day event as a reward for the top eight. This was the scheme backed by David Morgan, the chairman of the FCF,

and embraced by the counties. Lord MacLaurin described the incentive scheme as "a bit of a nonsense".

Extraordinarily, he has no vote and no automatic input within the FCF. "It may seem strange, but that is the constitution," he said. "I would feel worse about it if I had been in a voting position and been defeated. I would also add that I had not made a single phone call to a chairman to lobby support."

Intensive lobbying did go on, however, but MacLaurin bridled at a suggestion that he contributed to the reactionary cause by broadcasting his own preference. "It would have been a dereliction of

duty if I had not done so," he said. "I could have sat there and said nothing. But I was not just expressing my own favourite option. I was giving the views of the majority."

In the months of work that went into this project, all our market research favoured a two-division championship. It was overwhelming. The only people who came out against it were the county chairmen. That is their prerogative and they took a democratic decision, but it was my responsibility to give the other side. I don't think it was a mistake and I would do exactly the same thing again. I had to present the case, because when I took this job the chairman had asked me to chart the way forward. I did that and I believe I have fulfilled my obligations."

Lord MacLaurin, whose support for a split championship is shared privately by the paid executives at the ECB, may despair of the parochialism that regards the game, but he is determined not to be defeated by it. "The counties must realise that we have a serious problem. Their £1 million a year cannot be guaranteed if we have a game which is no longer attractive to television. County membership is down. Viewing figures are down. The future is uncertain and we have to do something to prevent a terminal decline."

"We've made a start. I'm encouraged by the support of the players and I am going to continue supporting two divisions because, in crickering and commercial terms, it is so obviously the right course."

Kent hopes hard hit by Stewart

By SIMON WILDE

CANTERBURY (second day of four): Surrey, with seven second-innings wickets in hand, are 192 runs ahead of Kent.

HOW things can change in the space of 24 hours. As dusk descended over the St Lawrence ground on Thursday, Kent, championship challengers, were in a perplexed state. They had taken an apparently unbreakable hold on their game with Surrey, but had done so on a pitch so much more sporting than intended that they awaited with trepidation an impending inquiry into its condition.

By last night, things were rather different, though scarcely less disquieting for them. Fears of a tide-shattering withdrawal of points had all but disappeared but the principal means of their salvation swiftly became their chief problem.

The pitch that had seemed and bounced extravagantly on the first day was unexpectedly calm yesterday and on a cooler, cloudier day the ball refused to swing as it had on the first, hazy morning. The end result was that Kent spent a long and fruitless afternoon in the field as Darren Bicknell and Alec Stewart posted a breezy third-wicket stand of 219 in 44 overs.

Stewart, whose first task was to prevent a hat-trick by Mark Ealham, seized on the changed situation brilliantly, going on the attack so remorselessly that Kent surrendered any semblance of control and were left to rue the short boundaries and the sameness of their all-seam

attack. The potential enormity of their fourth-innings task can have only added to their misgivings.

The extent of concern at possible action over the pitch on which 19 wickets fell on Thursday was apparent in the anxious expression on the face of Steve Marsh, the Kent captain, as Harry Brind, the England and Wales Cricket Board inspector of pitches, surveyed the square, amid much ceremony, before play began.

A three-man delegation — led by John Carr, the board's cricket operations manager — followed in his wake but opted to watch more of the game and delay their decision until either today or tomorrow, but unless the conditions undergo an even greater transformation punishment seems most unlikely.

After the remainder of Kent's innings trespassed only nine balls into the day, Butcher and Bicknell put on 69 for Surrey's first wicket and it was a surprise when Ealham struck twice shortly before lunch. Butcher offered a low return catch and Ratcliffe, whose first innings had encompassed only two balls, did less well second time around, courtesy of a magnificent catch by Ward at second slip. Surrey reached the interval on 75 for two, 21 in arrears, and in rain falling at Taunton Kent's ambitions burned bright.

But Stewart, sensing that timidity could be fatal, swiftly altered the game's landscape with a stream of boundaries in the hour after lunch, scoring 49 of the 69 runs added. He



Bicknell, perfectly balanced, flicks a short ball for four at Canterbury yesterday

saw off each frontline bowler in turn, so that Marsh was obliged to turn to Wells's innocuous medium-pace, but the tempo only increased as Bicknell began to feed off Stewart's optimism.

Stewart was the first to his hundred — off only 90 balls — with three whipped fours in a

row through mid-wicket, but in the circumstances Bicknell's effort was no less of an achievement. He has endured a soul-searching summer, playing more for the second XI than the first, but he may now have secured himself another contract, something that had been in serious doubt.

The mood had changed so much that when the final session began in poor light Surrey were keen to stay on, but when Phillips then knocked back Bicknell's off stump, after he had made 130, and flummoxed Brown with his next delivery, they thought better of it.

Hick leads assault on Hampshire and history

By JOHN THICKESSE

SOUTHAMPTON (second day of four): Worcestershire have scored 538 for two wickets against Hampshire.

GRAEME HICK and Tom Moody, having added an unfinished business within 30 runs of establishing a world record for the third wicket when rain wiped out the last two sessions yesterday.

Since victory over Hampshire might lift Worcestershire three places to third in the championship, enriching them by an extra £7,000 in prize-money, Moody may now have to declare and the record of 467, set by Andrew Jones and Martin Crowe for New Zealand against Sri Lanka at Wellington in 1990-91, may survive.

Not that the partners, who finished on 303 and 180 respectively, went short of records in their chanceless 400-minute stand. Among the most notable to fall were the county championship third-wicket best, previously 424 unfinished between Bill Edrich and

Denis Compton for Middlesex against Somerset in 1948 — one of only six stands of 400-plus in county cricket since the war — and Worcestershire's highest for any wicket, previously 323, which had stood since 1909.

For Hick, there was also the highest score against Hampshire, which since 1920 had been held by Percy Holmes, with 302 not out for Yorkshire at Portsmouth. Hick's was the first 300 at Southampton.

Though an earlier shower had trimmed 20 minutes from the morning, there was as much interest in the 29 overs that survived as in the whole of the first day. Despite having a 400 in his CV — 405 not out against Somerset in 1988 — Hick had set his heart on turning his overnight 253 into 300, giving him a three-figure entry at four levels. Bradman and Ponsford are the only members of that club.

The unexpected factor was that, as the target neared, Hick visibly grew tense. On Thursday, in six hours, he was

in trouble only once. Yesterday, having been rapped on the pads by Thomas Hansen, the Danish medium-pace left-arm bowler, Hick, on 271, was guilty of a mis-hit for the first time. Attempting to pull Simon Francis, he got a top edge that flew high enough for Aymes, the wicketkeeper, to pursue hard for 20 yards before giving up the chase, the ball careering over the fine-line boundary on the second bounce.

Finally, on 299, when he tried to turn Stephenson into the leg side, Hick was into the stroke early and nervously miscued. There was no chance of a catch to Laney at mid-wicket, but, seeing Hick on edge, Stephenson brought up White from the square leg boundary to form a leg-side inner ring. A more practiced bowler might have kept the pressure up with a couple of maidens. Instead, next ball, Stephenson dropped short on middle and leg, and Hick gratefully eased it through the gap for two.

Sussex offered little comfort

HOVE (second day of four): Sussex, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 374 runs behind Nottinghamshire.

YOU HAVE to take your hat off to Sussex for trying (Jack Bailey writes). Off the field they are in there pitching for the likes of Shane Warne and Dave Gilbert and, through Robin Marlar, their chairman, they stand up in the corridors of power for what they think is right for the less well-off in county cricket.

On the field, they are trying, too, although sheer endeavour is increasingly unlikely to prevent them from finishing

with the dreaded wooden spoon. To stand any chance of avoiding it, they must win this match, but Nottinghamshire have not been sympathetic.

Yesterday, they batted on until 45 minutes after lunch before declaring. By then, Afzaal, their 19-year-old left-handed batsman, had just fallen to Justin Bates when 20 runs short of his maiden century, the visitors had ground their way to 454 and the skies were already filling in with dark clouds.

There was time enough, though, for Sussex to lose Taylor and Peirce in reducing the deficit by 80 runs in the 23

overs the weather allowed and for Taylor to pass 1,000 runs for the season before falling to the impressive Andy Oram and for the name Bates to appear once more on the score-sheet as a wicket-taker. This time, though, it was Richard Bates, like his Sussex namesake an off-spinner, who accounted for Peirce, caught at short mid-off.

On a pitch that had lost much of its pace, the slow bowlers proved difficult to get away and Justin Bates was rewarded with the first five-wicket haul of his career as Franks, Evans and, finally, Afzaal fell to mistimed strokes.

Shah looks sure amid the gloom

By BARNEY SPENDER

CHELMSFORD (second day of four): Middlesex, with four first-innings wickets in hand, are 97 runs behind Essex.

AFTER the sunshine and intrigue of the opening day, reality bit yesterday. The stoic Chelmsford crowd huddled out of the rain all morning and then watched 52 overs of less-than-gripping cricket.

A win for Middlesex could enable them to finish third in the championship, but there was little to suggest that they were aware of that as they edged their way to 128 for six. David Nash and James Hewitt then added 46 in the gathering gloom against the spin of Such and Grayson, but when Iliot was recalled to break the stand, they accepted the offer of the light, depriving the day of a further 11 overs.

Iliot had induced Ramprakash to pop up a catch to short leg in the second over of the day and he ended Gattings's streaky innings with a ball that appeared to nip back through the gate. Ashley Cowan, who is to have an exploratory operation on his right shoulder next week, bowled a couple of fine spells and removed Johnson, the nightwatchman.

The brightest moments in the day came from Owais Shah who, perhaps unshackled by his maiden century in the previous game against Nottinghamshire, played with a certain sureness and freedom on a pitch assisting the seamers. He enjoyed some luck, though, being missed at second slip by Stuart Law and at mid-off by Such before the latter bowled him for 37.

Britannia Assurance county championship

Derbyshire v Yorkshire

DERBY (second day of four): Derbyshire, with seven second-innings wickets in hand, are 237 runs behind Yorkshire.

YORKSHIRE: First Innings 267 (R. Bailey 78, D. Brown 56, P. A. J. Delfino 4 for 74).
DERBYSHIRE: First Innings 16 (K. J. Barnett not out, 16; M. J. Johnson 16; M. E. Cresswell 16; Extras (b 2, lb 4).
Total (2 wickets) 30.
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-13 (2 overs); 2-30 (11 overs); 3-30 (11 overs); 4-30 (11 overs); 5-30 (11 overs); 6-30 (11 overs); 7-30 (11 overs); 8-30 (11 overs); 9-30 (11 overs); 10-30 (11 overs); 11-30 (11 overs); 12-30 (11 overs); 13-30 (11 overs); 14-30 (11 overs); 15-30 (11 overs); 16-30 (11 overs); 17-30 (11 overs); 18-30 (11 overs); 19-30 (11 overs); 20-30 (11 overs); 21-30 (11 overs); 22-30 (11 overs); 23-30 (11 overs); 24-30 (11 overs); 25-30 (11 overs); 26-30 (11 overs); 27-30 (11 overs); 28-30 (11 overs); 29-30 (11 overs); 30-30 (11 overs); 31-30 (11 overs); 32-30 (11 overs); 33-30 (11 overs); 34-30 (11 overs); 35-30 (11 overs); 36-30 (11 overs); 37-30 (11 overs); 38-30 (11 overs); 39-30 (11 overs); 40-30 (11 overs); 41-30 (11 overs); 42-30 (11 overs); 43-30 (11 overs); 44-30 (11 overs); 45-30 (11 overs); 46-30 (11 overs); 47-30 (11 overs); 48-30 (11 overs); 49-30 (11 overs); 50-30 (11 overs); 51-30 (11 overs); 52-30 (11 overs); 53-30 (11 overs); 54-30 (11 overs); 55-30 (11 overs); 56-30 (11 overs); 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New scoring system expected to increase excitement and produce closer finish next May

Whitbread crews buoyed up for best race yet

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE Whitbread round-the-world race begins on the Solent tomorrow and, although it is going to be with us for a long time — it returns to Southampton at the end of May — it promises to be the most exciting of the six to date.

The key difference this time is that it is a one-class contest. All ten crews are sailing the fast, physical and, at times, dangerous Whitbread 60s, so there will be no doubting who the overall winner is. In addition, this Whitbread is the first professional round-the-world race to abandon elapsed-time scoring in favour of points-per-leg.

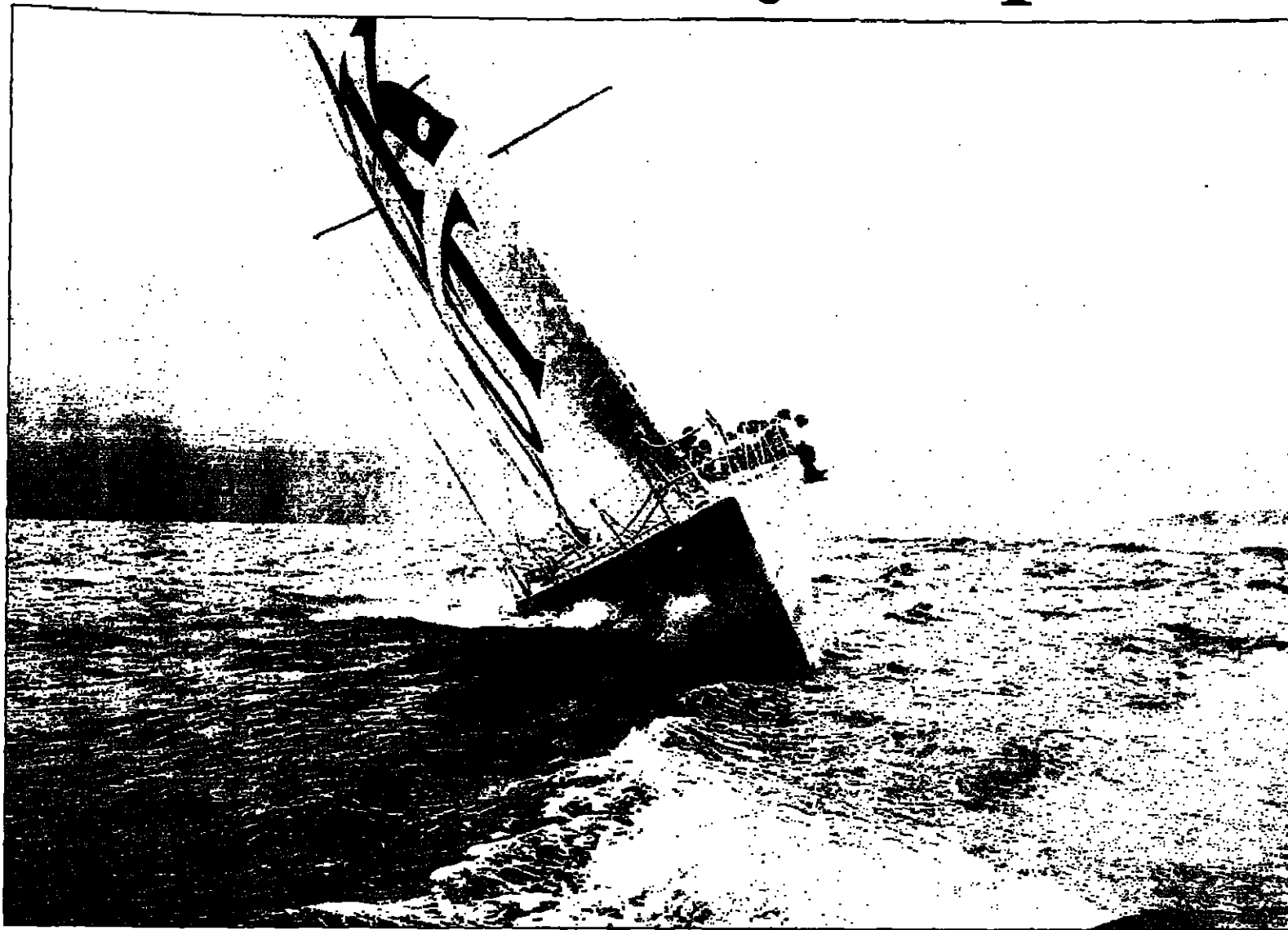
Whereas before, bad or good luck in the Doldrums on the first leg often settled the issue, this time the overall situation may remain tight until the sprint leg from La Rochelle to Southampton. The harder Southern Ocean legs are worth more points, but at the end of every leg, crews need only finish first by a whisker, not by hours or days, to secure maximum points.

The points system will influence tactics, with the top skippers much less likely to take risks and more inclined to hold back when in the lead, rather than pushing on and breaking the boat. The winner is likely to be the boat that consistently complies the points, while preserving equipment and crew. A dismasting or even loss of key sails on an important leg could still be enough to lose the race.

There are more stops than before. This makes the event long-winded but the positive effect is to make it into a regatta of nine separate races, rather than the traditional round-the-world slog. The finishes and starts will put a premium on close-quarter boat-handling and the skills of the professional crews should be tested to the limits.

Ian Bailey-Willmot, the race director, had hoped that about 18 boats would start, but the field has steadily dwindled. The high development costs have put some sponsors off, while others were confused by red herrings such as the Grand Mistral race. However, the ten boats that make up the field are of high quality and there is enough depth to make for an absorbing contest.

The so-called "box rule" which defines the limits of the Whitbread 60 class, has given way in practice to a "Bruce Farr rule". The American-



Silk Cut, Britain's entry in the Whitbread round-the-world Race, will be among the pre-race favourites. Photograph: David Branigan

based New Zealand designer has drawn eight of the ten boats. Only two are identical and the accepted dockside wisdom is that, overall, the differences are minor and unlikely to be decisive.

More critical is likely to be sail selection and management, with those syndicates that have done most work in these areas likely to have a faster option in all conditions. Changing gear on W60s is an art and the boats are sensitive to wrong sail combinations.

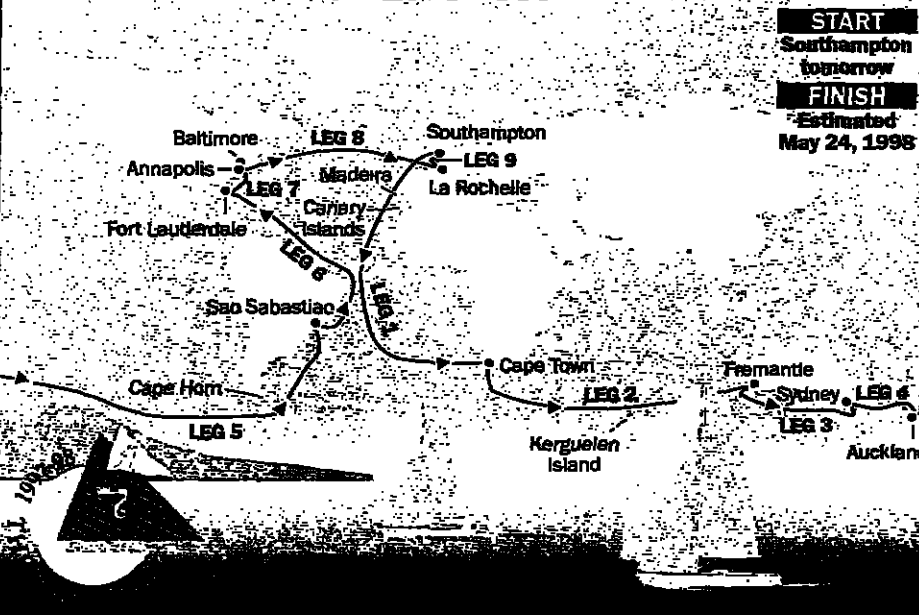
However, human resources may be the key to winning. The best boat and sails count for little if tactics are poor, or morale or discipline fail. The fleet is bursting with world-class talent and many of the skippers have distinguished track records in top-class yacht racing.

What gives this Whitbread an extra edge is the depth of history in the event among four of the leading skippers:

Chris Dickson, of New Zealand, on *Toshiba*, would have won on *Tokio* last time, had he not been dismayed; Lawrie Smith, of Great Britain, on *Silk Cut*, desperately wants to win at his fourth attempt; Grant Dalton, on *Merit Cup*, has triumphed in a maxi but now faces the ultimate test in a virtual one-design fleet; and Ross Field returns late in the day to skipper *America's Challenge* after winning the W60 class last time on *Yamaha*. Paul Cayard, on *EF Language*, is the new boy on the block, but is likely to be a fast learner.

This will be the most easily followed Whitbread to date. BBC2 will carry half-hour programmes on either Thursday or Friday nights throughout the race and the start tomorrow will be broadcast live. The race will also be covered on the Internet at www.whitbread.org

THE WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE 1997-1998



WHO'S WHO OF THE CHALLENGERS

America's Challenge

Designer: Alan Andrews; Skipper: Ross Field (NZ); Navigator: Howard Lubbe (NZ); Watch Captain: Richard Bouzard (NZ); Jeff Scott (NZ).

Syndicate head Dr Neil Smith from Newport Beach, California, has poured months of effort and his own money into getting this partly-sponsored boat to the start. The Andrews design may give the Farr boats a run for their money, though the crew has only come together in the last month with the appointment of Field, who won the Whitbread 60 class on *Yamaha* last time. With him are some experienced Whitbread sailors from Britain and elsewhere. Includes Bruce's Matt Humphries, who skippered *Dolphin & Youth* last time. Will do well to finish in the top five.

BruneiSuegry

Designer: Justin/John; Skipper: Hani Bouschelle (Holl); Navigator: Joan Cabecadas (Port); Watch Captain: Peter Tava (Holl); Aeron Van Borge (Holl); Gerard Roguue (Suez).

The other non-Farr boat which could spring a surprise. Early dockside gossip, however, suggests this little known Dutch crew will not be on the pace. Bouschelle is a Figaro and Tour de France à la Voile winner who has also competed in the Merit Cup and Admiral's Cup. This will be Roguue's fifth Whitbread, having sailed with Pierre Fehrmann in the past two races.

Chesire Racing

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: George Collins (US); Navigator: Juan Vela (Sp); Watch Captain: Grant Spanchal (NZ); Dave Scott (US).

Privately-funded boat with participation from the Living Classrooms Foundation. The crew is low on Whitbread experience but Collins is a top owner-driver in the States and the boat did well in the Fastnet finishing fifth, four minutes behind *Silk Cut*. Collins is using a square system for helmsmen with Gavin Brady, John Kostech, and Ken Read among those likely to join the boat for individual legs. The top outsider.

EF Language

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Paul Cayard (US); Navigator: Mark Rudger (US); Watch Captain: Magnus Osson (Swe); Kim Worthington (US).

Cayard came to this project in mid-December after Lawrie Smith backed out to join *Silk Cut*. Although an experienced America's Cup skipper, Cayard has had to cover a lot of ground to get up to speed in the Whitbread 60s. He was disappointed with the boat's Fastnet performance and replaced Nick White, the navigator with Mark Rudger. This team could be dangerous, but probably too late in the race to win.

EF Education

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Christine Gullou (Fr); Navigator: Lynne Beckley (SA); Watch Captain: Leah Newbold (NZ); Kim Rorale (Suez).

The third all-female team in the race's history, this one is extremely short on Whitbread experience and they start this race as late outsiders. Skipper Christine Gullou is an accomplished single and double-handed sailor. She may be assisted on eighth leg by France's top female single-handed, Isabelle Autissier.

Innovation Kvaerner

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Knut Frostad (Nor); Navigator: Marcel van Trest (Holl); Watch Captain: Jim Cisse (Aus); Pierre Mas (Fr).

The dark horse of the fleet, Frostad's boat is regarded by his competitors as one of the latest all-round performers whose poor showing in the Fastnet may be highly misleading. The preparation has been marvellous with early training on the old *Winton* followed by extensive on-board testing of the new boat. Frostad made his name on *Idram Justitia* in the last race on which he sailed with both van Trest and Mas.

Merit Cup

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Grant Dalton (NZ); Navigator: Steve Gutter (NZ); Watch Captain: Cullion Neven Shoenberg (NZ).

Grant Dalton won the maxi class in the last race in New Zealand. Endeavour. The most experienced skipper, this is his fifth Whitbread, but also his biggest test as he takes on the world's best captain in the 1960 class. Experienced crew, a two-boat programme, strong loyalty to the skipper, and plenty of money to hand — a potential winner.

Silk Cut

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Lawrie Smith (GB); Navigator: Steve Gutter (GB); Watch Captain: Gordon Taggart (Sue).

Lawrie Smith's Whitbread dream came crashing down last time with the dismasting of *Fortuna* on the first leg but he sparked an *Intrum Justitia* for the rest of the race. This is his third full Whitbread and with big money behind him from *Silk Cut*, it is his best chance of winning it. The boat is the last from the Farr board and Smith has tested more than 70 sails.

Swedish Match

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Gunnar Kuntz (Swe); Navigator: Roger Nelson (Swe); Watch Captain: Tim Hager (Ger); Rodney Aldem (NZ).

The most elegant paint-job on show, this boat has the potential to finish in the top three. The project is the result of the Kuntz/Nelson partnership who both have rich Whitbread pedigrees. A strong New Zealand and Swedish crew includes Eric Williams, as co-skipper who last sailed the race on *Flyer* in 1981, plus the only German in the fleet, Tim Krog.

Toshiba Racing

Designer: Bruce Farr; Skipper: Chris Dickson (NZ); Navigator: Andrew Cape (Aus); Watch Captain: Paul Standbridge (GB); Ross Macdonald (Can); Steve Cotton (Aus).

With Dennis Corner as overall team boss, *Toshiba* is a well-drilled and well-funded boat with one of the most experienced crews. Chris Dickson is probably the most talented Whitbread 60 skipper in the fleet. Another possible winner. The only team using "Cuben fibre" sails.

PORTS OF CALL

First leg (today to Oct 22): Southampton to Cape Town (7,350 miles). Second leg (Nov 8 to Nov 24): Cape Town to Fremantle (4,870 miles). Third leg (Dec 13 to Dec 22): Fremantle to Sydney (2,250 miles). Fourth leg (Jan 4 to Jan 9): Sydney to Auckland (1,270 miles). Fifth leg (Feb 1 to Feb 23): Auckland to Sao Sebastiao (6,670 miles). Sixth leg (Mar 14 to Mar 24): Sao Sebastiao to La Rochelle (4,750 miles). Seventh leg (Apr 19 to Apr 22): La Rochelle to Cape Town (7,350 miles). Eighth leg (May 3 to May 16): Cape Town to La Rochelle (4,750 miles). Ninth leg (May 22 to May 24): La Rochelle to Southampton (450 miles).

EDWARD GORMAN

Fisherman lands part of Baggio's pride and joy

LET no one say that this column has ever shrunk from the task of bringing the most important news in sport to its readers. What I hear you ask, has happened to *Il codino divino*, aka The Divine Ponytail, the extravaganza of the Italian footballer, Roberto Baggio. It was this column that broke the news to the nation that Baggio had cut the thing off. Now I can reveal that he gave a part of it to a fisherman called Ferruccio Paolo, with whom Baggio goes fishing. The two never talked football, but Paolo added: "I did teach Robertino something, though. I taught him how to fish or *vongole*, and I must admit he has learnt quickly and well."

Heart to heart

Jose Lopez will take part in the 5,000 metres walk in the Australian Transplant Games next month competing against his own heart. Lopez was given a new heart and lungs, which came from the young victim of a car crash. But it turned out that his own heart was still in good shape — so it was given to a Tasmanian

SIMON BARNES



On Saturday

farmer, Keith Webb. The pair subsequently became friends. Lopez said: "If he beats me, I'll ask for my heart back."

Sisters of Charity

Alas, on this day of days, I cannot bring you a Marge Schott story, but at least I can do the next best thing and tell one about George Steinbrenner, owner of the New York Yankees. After months of legal battles, Steinbrenner at

last managed to sign the Japanese pitcher, Hideki Irabu, in a \$12 million deal. But alas, Irabu is playing well below expectations. Steinbrenner went public with the following kindly intentioned statement: "I've got around seven dozen Hideki Irabu T-shirts. I am giving them to the Little Sisters of the Blind."

Come on Scobie

This week, the Queen's horse, Arabian Story, managed a storming victory and there are now plans to ship the four-year-old across the world to take part in the Melbourne Cup later this year. This prompted an Australian jockey of some note to pick up the phone and called Lord Huntingdon, Arabian Story's trainer, to declare himself available and willing to take the ride. This was none other than the great Scobie Breasley. The man certainly has class on his side, not to mention experience. Breasley is now 82.

Rough surface

This column has always sought to bring historical perspective to sporting matters and so, after the fall of 19 wickets on the first day of the crucial county championship match between Kent and Surrey, let us turn our thoughts to the pitches at Lord's in the 19th century. "Lord's wickets resemble a billiard table only because both have pockets," one critic of the time said. A pitch was prepared for a match by sending in a bunch of boys to pick the grass with their hands; the outfield was mowed by sheep, which did a good job with the grass, but left behind ample evidence of their passing. The lawnmower was invented in 1836; it was 40 years before these new-fangled devices were regularly used on cricket grounds. By this reckoning, the county championship format of the present day is just about perfect for 1957.

TRIATHLON

Lessing out to sustain run on path to Perth

By DAVID POWELL

SIMON LESSING, the world champion, defends his unbeaten record for the season in the inaugural London Triathlon tomorrow. It will be Lessing's only competitive appearance of the year in Britain and his first since winning the International Triathlon Grand Prix at Longest 13 months ago. Lessing, South African-born, resident in France but representing Great Britain, comes to London two weeks after winning the France Iron Tour, eight races in nine days at various locations. He is keen to maintain the momentum as he moves towards defending his world Olympic distance title in Perth, Australia, eight weeks hence.

The Olympic distance — 1,500 metres swim, 40 kilometres ride, ten kilometres run — is the one adopted by London. Given that London will also permit the controversial drafting element, allowing cyclists to slipstream, Lessing should win comfortably. His strongest discipline is the run. Should he choose, he may slipstream on the ride, then attack on the run.

Ceris Gillfillan, 17, will be among the contenders to win the elite women's race after the withdrawal through injury of Stan Brice, the British Olympic distance champion, and through illness of Annaleah Emmerson, the British middle-distance champion. So talented is Gillfillan that she will represent Great Britain at two sports in world championships in the next eight weeks. While studying for her A levels, Gillfillan will compete in the cycling world championships in San Sebastian next month.

London prepares, page 13

SPORT IN BRIEF

Cairns prompts Test collapse

CHRIS CAIRNS, the New Zealand all-rounder, completed his fourth five-wicket haul on the second day of the first Test match against Zimbabwe in Harare yesterday. Zimbabwe, 205 for four overnight, subsided to 298 all out. Grant Flower completing his third Test century before becoming one of Cairns's victims. New Zealand were 91 for three when bad light forced an early close.

Apart from Flower, who made 104, the only worthwhile resistance came from Paul Strang, who made 42, and John Rennie (22). The eighth-wicket pair put on 51. The last three wickets fell in the space of 17 balls, two of them to catches at first slip by Stephen Fleming, whose five catches equalled the best haul in a Test innings, excluding the wicketkeeper. New Zealand then lost both opening batsmen, Spearman and Pocock, in successive balls, as well as Horne, who was caught at fine leg.

Bjorkman holds out

TENNIS: Jonas Bjorkman wore down Omar Camporese 6-7, 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 to give Sweden a 1-0 lead over Italy in their Davis Cup semi-final tie in Norrkoping yesterday. It was the first of a tough three days for Bjorkman, who will play every day in the best-of-five series.

Bjorkman, 25, is used to demanding Davis Cup weekends. He also played three matches in the quarter-final against South Africa, including ten sets in the doubles and the singles. But few expected that Camporese, ranked only 220th in the world, would extend the Swede to five sets. Bjorkman, ranked No 13, reached the US Open semi-finals earlier this month.

McRae seizes initiative

RALLYING: Colin McRae, of Scotland, driving a 555 Subaru, took a 35-second lead over Tommi Makinen, in a Mitsubishi, after eight special stages in the Rally of Indonesia yesterday. McRae and his co-driver, Nicky Grist, led the world championship contenders into Parapat for an overnight stop.

Drivers face eight more stages today, over 149 kilometres, with the likelihood that heavy rain will create treacherous road conditions. "Everyone knows that if it rains here, it's the crew who actually manage to stay on the road and lose less time than anyone else who succeed," McRae said.

White lightning

SNOOKER: Jimmy White, without a tournament win for more than four years, needed only 78 minutes to overcome Ronnie O'Sullivan 6-0 in the semi-finals of the Catch China International Super Challenge in Beijing yesterday (Phil Yates writes). White will now play Steve Davis in the final. Despite the ease of his victory over O'Sullivan, who produced one of his least effective performances for a long time, White will have to be at his best to beat Davis, who progressed to the final by beating James Wattana 6-1. Davis's victory improved his frame record in the Beijing event to 15-1.

CYCLING

Boardman bounces back to defend title

By PETER BRYAN

CHRIS BOARDMAN, eager to wipe out the memories of his "worst season" so far, culminating in his retirement last week from the Tour of Spain, is back in competition today. He has been given dispensation to ride in the classic Grand Prix des Nations time-trial at Lac de Madine, in France.

Boardman won the 72-kilometre event last year, ahead of Bjorne Riss and Abraham Olano, but did not enter this year because it clashed with the race in Spain. "In the Spanish tour the previous nine months" racing and training just caught up with me," he said yesterday. "It was disappointing to retire, but at least I have been able to have a rest and recharge my batteries during the past week."

"I'm fairly confident that I can do a good ride. I know and like the course which is mainly

on good, wide roads." Boardman regards Johan Museeuw, the world race champion, as his main rival.

Britain's other entries are David Millar, the prologue winner in the Tour de l'Avenir, Paul Manning and Yvonne McGregor, the bronze medal-winner in the world track pursuit championship last month.

Pavel Tonkov, of Russia, celebrated the birth of his son, Nicholas, by winning the thirteenth stage of the Tour of Spain in Valgrande Pajares yesterday. He raced clear in the last four kilometres of a mountainous, 196-kilometre stage from Pomerance to finish 31 seconds ahead of José Jimenez, of Spain.

Laurent Dufaux, of Switzerland, was third, bringing him four seconds closer to Alex Zülle, who now leads overall by 32 seconds.



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FOOTBALL SATURDAY



CHELSEA
v
ARSENAL
Tomorrow, 4.0



Oliver Holt
Dennis Bergkamp's fear of flying may have been an issue when Arsenal had to travel to PAOK Salonika earlier this week but Stamford Bridge is so close to Highbury that the Dutchman could get there on the Tube. Bergkamp will be back for the biggest FA Carling Premiership match of the season so far and his presence may just swing the balance towards the North London club.

Bergkamp was in mesmeric form before his enforced European lay-off and he is likely to be straining to impress again after his absence contributed to Arsenal's defeat in Greece. His understanding with Ian Wright, freed at last from the burden of trying to break the club's goal-scoring record once held by Cliff Bastin, has become almost telepathic and the combination of the two of them may be just too much for Chelsea.

Tony Adams is back, too, after his prolonged fightback from injury, so the only selection choice facing the Arsenal coach, Arsene Wenger, is whether to restore Gilles Grimandi, who was suspended for the UEFA Cup match, to the side in place of the

veteran, Steve Bould. Marc Overmars, the Holland winger, is also coming under pressure as he struggles to adapt to the extra workload expected of him in English football, but Wenger is likely to persevere with him for some time yet.

Chelsea have won their past four Premiership matches and have moved on to the shoulders of Manchester United and Blackburn Rovers. However, they were trounced in the corresponding fixture at Stamford Bridge last season and they may be tired after the frustration of their modest home win over Slovan Bratislava on Thursday.

Apart from the aberration of their opening-day defeat at Coventry City, they have sailed past their other opponents and Arsenal will represent a significant step up in calibre, compared with the teams they have faced so far. They will have to wipe the profligacy they showed against the Slovaks from their performance if they are to beat Arsenal.

The selection of Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea player-manager, is bound to be a talking-point again. Gianluca Vialli started the match against Slovan, so he might make way tomorrow, allowing Tore Andre Flo and Mark Hughes back into the equation alongside Gianfranco Zola. Only Dennis Wise, the subject of lavish weekly praise from Gullit, seems exempt from being dropped.

TELEVISION: Tomorrow: Live on Sky Sports 1, 4.0.
PREDICTION: Arsenal to win by one goal.



And I said it's your turn to cut the grass... the ground-sharers of Crystal Palace and Wimbledon come to blows at Selhurst Park

FIRST
11
ELEVEN

SHARE ISSUE

Football's version of This Life takes place today, when Crystal Palace face Wimbledon in an away game at their own ground. Stand by for all those arguments about Vinnie Jones squeezing the toothpaste from the middle and Eran Elkou never washing up the saucepans properly.

1. Manchester City and Manchester United. When Old Trafford suffered bomb damage in the Second World War, City generously invited United over to stay.
2. Macclesfield Town and Chester City. Moss Rose was considered good enough for League football when Chester were homeless between 1980 and 1982, but strangely not when Macclesfield first won the Conference in 1995.
3. Bradford Northern and Bradford City. City used Odsal Stadium, home of the town's rugby league club, for more than a year after the fire at Valley Parade in 1985.
4. Crystal Palace and Charlton Athletic. When The Valley was left to the weeds, Charlton spent six unhappy years seven miles away at Selhurst.
5. West Ham United and Charlton Athletic. They lived with Hamilton Road for four months at Upton Park.
6. Gillingham and Brighton. The latest and perhaps least popular ground-share.
7. Queens Park and Celtic. The Boys went across the city and used Hampden Park in 1994-95 while Celtic Park was being redeveloped.
8. Nottinghamshire CCC and Notts Co. The oldest club in the Football League spent 27 years at Trent Bridge before moving to Meadow Lane in 1910.
9. Bath City and Bristol Rovers. Rovers left Eastville for Twerton Park in 1988 and remained outside their home city for ten years.
10. Wexford and Wealdstone. Vicarage Road proved a little on the large side for the Beazer Homes League side.
11. Partick Thistle and Clyde. Partick offered Clyde a roof over their heads when they left Shawfield in 1986. They stayed for five years and then spent another five with Hamilton Academical before finding a new home.

Compiled by Richard Whitehead



Russell Kempson
A virus has been doing the Aston Villa rounds this week, with Brian Little, the manager, having to shoulder most of the blame. "It started with the boss," Allan Evans, his assistant, said. "There's been a lot of sore throats about."

It might perhaps explain why Stan Collymore was so lifeless in the UEFA Cup first round, first-leg 0-0 draw against Bordeaux, but he will retain his place for the visit of Derby County today. Savo Milosevic, a possible replacement, has been poorly, too.

At least Sasa Curcic, the temperamental Yugoslav, looked good in the Stade Lescur, when replacing Simon Grayson, and he will probably make his first start of the season today. After asking to come off the transfer list, it appears he has at last made his peace with the club. "He's happy now and his attitude is good,"



ASTON VILLA
v
DERBY COUNTY
Today, 3.0

good in the Stade Lescur, when replacing Simon Grayson, and he will probably make his first start of the season today. After asking to come off the transfer list, it appears he has at last made his peace with the club. "He's happy now and his attitude is good,"

Little said. "We nearly lost him, but I'm glad we didn't."
Derby have yet to collect a point on their travels and are likely to draw another blank. Jacob Laurssen, the defender, broke his nose in the 3-1 victory over Everton last week but will play on. "His nose is not out of alignment," Jim Smith, the Derby manager, said. That's OK, then.

ASTON VILLA (probable): 3-5-2: E. de Guay — P. Hughes, M. Duberry, F. Leboeuf — D. Preece, G. D. Maitland, D. West, G. Rye, G. Le Saer — G. Zola, M. Hughes.
DERBY COUNTY (probable): 4-4-2: D. Seaman — L. Dixon, A. Adams, G. Gossard, N. Winstanley, R. Parfitt, P. Vieira, E. Pate, M. Overmars — D. Bergkamp, I. Wright.
Referee: D. Gollagher.

TELEVISION: Tomorrow: Live on Sky Sports 1, 4.0.
PREDICTION: Arsenal to win by one goal.

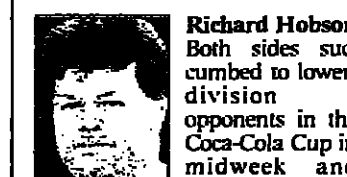


WEST HAM UNITED
v
NEWCASTLE UNITED
Today, 3.0

West Ham United
Newcastle United
Today, 3.0

West Ham United
Newcastle United
Today, 3.0

West Ham United
Newcastle United
Today, 3.0

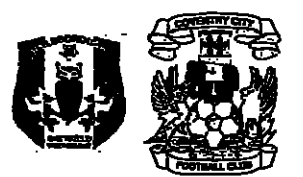


SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY
v
COVENTRY CITY
Today, 3.0

Sheffield Wednesday
Coventry City
Today, 3.0

Sheffield Wednesday
Coventry City
Today, 3.0

Sheffield Wednesday
Coventry City
Today, 3.0



SOUTHAMPTON
v
LIVERPOOL
Today, 3.0

Southampton
Liverpool
Today, 3.0

Southampton
Liverpool
Today, 3.0

Southampton
Liverpool
Today, 3.0

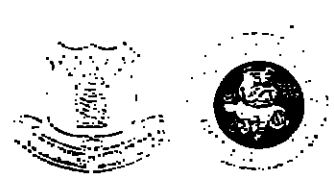
turn after missing the 1-0 defeat at Blackpool because of a knee injury. That game was played in torrential rain and winds approaching 50mph and Coventry have made an official complaint after a spectator pointed a laser beam into Kyle Lightbourne's face. Lightbourne will continue if Huckerby fails to recover from an ankle injury while Nilsson will play against his former club.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: Coventry to edge a high-scoring game.



David Maddock
Alex Ferguson could be tempted to adopt the Take That approach this afternoon — Everything Changes. The manager has identified the Saturday hangover after the European midweek match as a problem and has spoken of wholesale changes, so Ronnie Johnson, Phil Neville, Teddy Sheringham, Jordi Cruyff and even Brian McClair may all come in. Will Andy Cole be allowed another opportunity to devise ever more weird and wonderful ways of missing in front of goal?

Bolton have made an indifferent start, but there will be no indifference to only their second



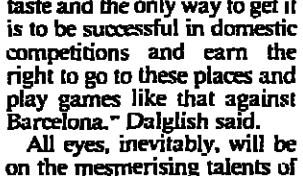
BOLTON WANDERERS
v
MANCHESTER UNITED
Today, 3.0

Bolton Wanderers
Manchester United
Today, 3.0

Bolton Wanderers
Manchester United
Today, 3.0

will be thrown into the deep end for his debut and Mike Whitlow also starts for his new club against the team he supported as a boy, after signing on Thursday. Colin Todd has slight injury worries over Beardsley, Sellers and Thompson, but his biggest headache will be trying to avoid a repeat of the 6-0 thrashing handed out when Bolton last entertained United two seasons ago.

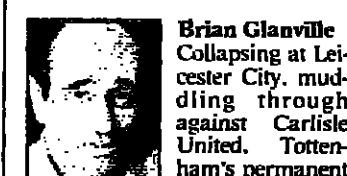
TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, extended highlights.
PREDICTION: A whirlwind game ending in a draw.



EVERTON
v
BARNESLEY
Today, 3.0

Everton
Barnsley
Today, 3.0

Everton
Barnsley
Today, 3.0



TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
v
BLACKBURN ROVERS
Today, 3.0

Tottenham Hotspur
Blackburn Rovers
Today, 3.0

Tottenham Hotspur
Blackburn Rovers
Today, 3.0



WIMBLEDON
v
CRYSTAL PALACE
Today, 3.0

Wimbledon
Crystal Palace
Today, 3.0

Wimbledon
Crystal Palace
Today, 3.0

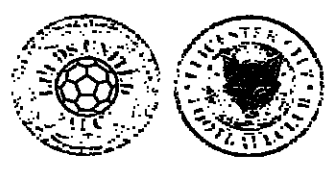
Whatever problems Blackburn may have at the back are unlikely to be exposed by a Spurs attack so short of strikers. Hope for Tottenham lies in the brave brilliance of Dominguez, the tiny Portuguese, and the sporadically dazzling Ruel Fox. Who knows, David Ginola may even brighten a game worthy of his reputation. Hard, though, to see Blackburn losing.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, extended highlights.
PREDICTION: A Blackburn victory.



Mark Hodgkinson
Eland Road is fast becoming the country's unofficial Home for Fallen Footballers. Two of its long-term residents, Brolin and Yeboah, may soon be offloaded to Heart of Midlothian and SV Hamburg respectively. This will delight the diplomats at Leeds United's Clubcell, who referred to the pair this week as "men of yesterday still hanging around today".

Leeds have been the epitome of inconsistency this season, veering from the inspired to the insipid. They were dashing in the surprise win at Blackburn Rovers last weekend, but only marginal-



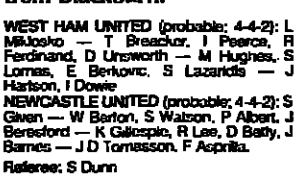
LEEDS UNITED
v
LEICESTER CITY
Today, 3.0

Leeds United
Leicester City
Today, 3.0

Leeds United
Leicester City
Today, 3.0

pean action might be expected to hinder their FA Carling Premiership programme. Martin O'Neill, their manager, will have none of it. He is a shrewd motivator and they will set about Leeds with more than enough vigour.

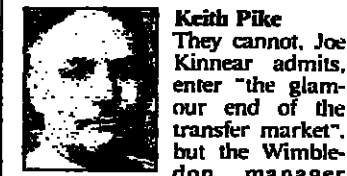
TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: Scappy 2-1 win for the visitors.



WEST HAM UNITED
v
NEWCASTLE UNITED
Today, 3.0

West Ham United
Newcastle United
Today, 3.0

West Ham United
Newcastle United
Today, 3.0



SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY
v
COVENTRY CITY
Today, 3.0

Sheffield Wednesday
Coventry City
Today, 3.0

Sheffield Wednesday
Coventry City
Today, 3.0



SOUTHAMPTON
v
LIVERPOOL
Today, 3.0

Southampton
Liverpool
Today, 3.0

Southampton
Liverpool
Today, 3.0

To emphasise the point, Kinnear said that Cort has only a "good chance" of retaining his place, but having made seven changes for the match against Millwall, Kinnear is sure to return to his A team against a Palace side now fulfilling expectations, ie. struggling. Warhurst, Edworthy and Rodger are struggling with injury, but Lombardo returns.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: Wimbledon to make home advantage count.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Anatomy of the goal that appears to have excited everyone

I'll let you in on a little secret. I didn't just close my eyes and hit it. I'm referring to the goal I scored against Celtic on Tuesday evening, which seems to have generated quite a bit of interest. After the game I was surrounded by television cameras and they all asked me to talk about the goal. So I said it was nothing really. I just ran with the ball and when I arrived at the edge of the box I closed my eyes and hit it. When I looked up, the ball was in the net. I wasn't being glib. I wasn't being falsely modest. If I'm honest I was ever so slightly embarrassed because the goal obscured the fact that Liverpool had played badly in the second half at Celtic Park.

That's why I tried to play it down. I wanted to get the point across that we had been a bit lucky because we had not fired on all cylinders and yet had escaped with

a draw, when we could so easily have lost a match we should have won. It was a frustrating game, even though I scored a decent goal, because we showed that we are a good side capable of playing intelligent football, but then we just fell away as the match progressed. I felt it would have been misleading to concentrate on my goal.

But people have been talking to me about it all week. It wasn't a bad goal and it was probably one of the best I've scored, in a game that matters anyway. Interestingly, though, I do see it differently to most people.

I've read since that I beat four or five people and that it was one of the great goals. I honestly don't see it like that. In my own mind, I didn't beat anyone in the real sense of the word. When I picked the ball up, Wieghorst came tight and

made up my mind for me. I pushed the ball one side of him and ran past him on the other. But from then, I don't think I went round anyone. There was space for me to run into and I took it. When I got close to the penalty area, the Celtic defence pushed me towards the left and then, belatedly, a player came to challenge.

I had already looked up as I approached the area and saw there was a space to the goalkeeper's right and, just before the challenge came in, I got a good contact and it went in. My instant emotion was relief, because we should not have been losing the match.

You don't get a clear picture of things opening up for you on a run like that, it's not so simple. I suppose it took maybe five or six seconds to score the goal, but during the run I didn't think the chance was developing for me.



McMANAMAN'S WORLD

There were two good runs from our forwards in front of me and that helped to create the space. It was only as I approached the penalty area that I could see the shooting chance developing.

One or two people have said it was one of the greatest goals they have ever seen. But I've seen far better. Trevor Sinclair's for Queens Park Rangers last season — that spectacular overhead kick — was absolutely brilliant and the best, for me, must have been Maradona's against England in the World Cup quarter-finals in 1986.

That had everything. He ran a long way, beat players, showed strength and then found the perfect finish. It was also a huge occasion and I think that is what defines a great goal — if you produce it when it really matters.

My goal was bound to get attention, if only because I ran a long way and it was in the last minute. But when you score goals like that, it's funny how things develop for you. Take the Maradona goal. As he came forward, the first defender dived in and that helped him on. When defenders dive in, it gives

an advantage to the forward because it not only gives you the opportunity to get past him and move on at pace, but it also throws the defenders behind him out. So often when a defender dives in, it puts everyone else off balance, moves them out of position and creates space.

I was amused by the reaction to my goal. If you score a decent one, then you are a great player no matter how you have played during the rest of the game. But then it only lasts a week, because the next time you miss people develop short memories. That's just the way it is. So I'd better enjoy this while I can. It wasn't my best ever though. Did I ever mention the time when I was 12?

And so to the return leg at Anfield. If we are honest, everyone in the Liverpool team must accept that in the end we were fortunate to escape from Celtic Park with a draw and two valuable away goals. After the start we had, when we really did play well for the first 20 minutes, we should not have allowed ourselves to slip into the position where Celtic stole the initiative in the game and could have punished us even further.

We had problems, partly because Paul Ince had been suffering badly from flu and had not been able to get out of bed for the two days before the match. He admitted during the game that he

was finding it hard going, but that cannot be used as an excuse. The fact remains that if we lose concentration in the return leg and allow the game to slip again, then we will be punished.

Celtic are a committed team. They thrived on the passion their supporters generated and once they got going they really came at us. It was a great atmosphere in Glasgow. The fans really seemed to enjoy the evening and they know how to get behind their side. I'm sure it will be a similar atmosphere at our ground, because I know our supporters are looking forward to the visit of Celtic and that they want to put on a bit of a show by supporting us fervently. It was a good game to watch last Tuesday night and I hope the return leg will be the same.

We are in a good position and if we play to our full ability then I'm sure we can go through to the next round. We will also have Robbie Fowler available and that will be a bonus.

Michael Owen and Karlheinz Riedle have played very well this season, but you can't argue against Robbie's record. He has scored 30 goals in each of his first three seasons for Liverpool and you just know that he will do the same this season if he can avoid any further injuries.

STEVE McMANAMAN

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

(Last week's position in brackets)				HOME					AWAY					LAST 10 MATCHES W-D-L	CURRENT STREAK
PLAYED	POINTS	GOAL DIFF.		W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
1. MANCHESTER UTD (2)	6	16	+9	3	0	0	6	1	2	1	0	4	0	5-1-0	W3
2. BLACKBURN ROVERS (1)	6	13	+9	2	1	1	12	7	2	0	0	6	1	4-1-1	L1
3. CHELSEA (4)	5	12	+12	1	0	0	4	2	3	0	1	13	3	4-0-1	W4
4. ARSENAL (5)	6	12	+7	2	1	0	6	1	1	2	0	7	5	3-3-0	W1
5. LEICESTER CITY (6)	6	11	+4	2	2	0	7	3	1	0	1	2	2	3-2-1	W1
6. WEST HAM UTD (3)	6	10	+2	2	0	0	5	2	1	1	2	5	6	3-1-2	L1
7. LIVERPOOL (11)	5	8	+2	1	0	1	3	3	1	2	0	4	2	2-2-1	W2
8. COVENTRY CITY (13)	6	8	-3	2	2	0	7	5	0	0	2	0	5	2-2-2	W1
9. LEEDS UTD (15)	6	7	-2	0	1	2	1	5	2	0	1	7	5	2-1-3	W1
10. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (7)	6	7	-4	2	0	1	4	4	0	1	2	1	5	2-1-3	L1
11. DERBY COUNTY (17)	4	6	+1	2	0	0	4	1	0	0	2	0	2	2-0-2	W2
12. NEWCASTLE UTD (8)	3	6	0	2	0	1	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	2-0-1	L1
13. ASTON VILLA (19)	6	6	-3	1	0	1	1	4	1	0	3	5	5	2-0-4	W2
14. CRYSTAL PALACE (9)	6	6	-3	0	0	3	1	6	2	0	1	4	2	2-0-4	L3
15. BARNLEY (10)	6	6	-9	1	0	3	3	12	1	0	1	1	1	2-0-3	L2
16. WIMBLEDON (20)	5	5	-2	0	2	1	2	4	1	0	1	4	4	1-2-2	W1
17. BOLTON WANDERERS (12)	5	5	-3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	5	8	1-2-2	L2
18. EVERTON (14)	5	4	-4	1	0	2	3	5	0	1	1	1	3	1-1-3	L2
19. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (16)	6	4	-8	1	0	1	2	3	0	1	3	5	12	1-1-4	L1
20. SOUTHAMPTON (18)	6	3	-6	1	0	2	2	4	0	0	3	2	6	1-0-5	L2

WEEKEND MATCHES

TODAY				THIRD DIVISION			
Kick-off 3.0	Pools coupon numbers in brackets	FA Carling Premiership	Nationwide League	First division	Second division	Third division	Fourth division
1. Aston Villa v Derby	11	(1) Aston Villa v Derby	(10) Crewe v Queens Park Rangers	(11) Ipswich v Stoke	(12) Blackpool v Oldham	(13) Barnsley v Bolton	(14) Carlisle v Plymouth
2. Bolton v Manchester Utd	12	(2) Bolton v Manchester Utd	(11) Ipswich v Stoke	(13) Barnsley v Bolton	(14) Carlisle v Plymouth	(15) Gillingham v Watford	(16) Grimsby v Millwall
3. Everton v Barnsley	13	(3) Everton v Barnsley	(12) Blackpool v Oldham	(14) Carlisle v Plymouth	(15) Gillingham v Watford	(16) Grimsby v Millwall	(17) Luton v Wrexham
4. Leeds v Leicester	14	(4) Leeds v Leicester	(13) Barnsley v Bolton	(15) Gillingham v Watford	(16) Grimsby v Millwall	(17) Luton v Wrexham	(18) Northampton v Wigan
5. Sheffield Wednesday v Coventry	15	(5) Sheffield Wednesday v Coventry	(14) Carlisle v Plymouth	(16) Grimsby v Millwall	(17) Luton v Wrexham	(18) Northampton v Wigan	(19) Southend v Fulham
6. Southampton v Liverpool	16	(6) Southampton v Liverpool	(15) Gillingham v Watford	(17) Luton v Wrexham	(18) Northampton v Wigan	(19) Southend v Fulham	(20) Walsall v York
7. Tottenham v Blackburn	17	(7) Tottenham v Blackburn	(16) Grimsby v Millwall	(18) Northampton v Wigan	(19) Southend v Fulham	(20) Walsall v York	
8. West Ham v Newcastle	18	(8) West Ham v Newcastle	(17) Luton v Wrexham	(19) Southend v Fulham	(20) Walsall v York		
9. Wimbledon v Crystal Palace	19	(9) Wimbledon v Crystal Palace	(18) Northampton v Wigan	(20) Walsall v York			
NATIONWIDE LEAGUE				THIRD DIVISION			
10. Crewe v Queens Park Rangers	20	(10) Crewe v Queens Park Rangers	(19) Southend v Fulham	(20) Walsall v York			
11. Ipswich v Stoke	21	(11) Ipswich v Stoke					
12. Blackpool v Oldham	22	(12) Blackpool v Oldham					
13. Barnsley v Bolton	23	(13) Barnsley v Bolton					
14. Carlisle v Plymouth	24	(14) Carlisle v Plymouth					
15. Gillingham v Watford	25	(15) Gillingham v Watford					
16. Grimsby v Millwall	26	(16) Grimsby v Millwall					
17. Luton v Wrexham	27	(17) Luton v Wrexham					
18. Northampton v Wigan	28	(18) Northampton v Wigan					
19. Southend v Fulham	29	(19) Southend v Fulham					
20. Walsall v York	30	(20) Walsall v York					
NATIONWIDE LEAGUE				THIRD DIVISION			
21. Blackpool v Oldham	31	(21) Blackpool v Oldham					
22. Barnsley v Bolton	32	(22) Barnsley v Bolton					
23. Carlisle v Plymouth	33	(23) Carlisle v Plymouth					
24. Gillingham v Watford	34	(24) Gillingham v Watford					
25. Grimsby v Millwall	35	(25) Grimsby v Millwall					
26. Luton v Wrexham	36	(26) Luton v Wrexham					
27. Northampton v Wigan	37	(27) Northampton v Wigan					
28. Southend v Fulham	38	(28) Southend v Fulham					
29. Walsall v York	39	(29) Walsall v York					
30. Walsall v York	40	(30) Walsall v York					

ATTACK		
Goals scored	Average	
1. Chelsea	17	3.40
2. Blackburn	18	3.00
3. Arsenal	13	2.17
4. Manchester Utd	10	1.67
= West Ham	10	1.67
6. Leicester	9	1.50
7. Liverpool	7	1.40
8. Leeds Utd	8	1.33
9. Newcastle	4	1.33
10. Wimbledon	6	1.20
11. Coventry	7	1.17
= Sheffield Wed	7	1.17
13. Aston Villa	6	1.00
= Bolton	5	1.00
= Derby	4	1.00
16. Crystal Palace	5	0.83
= Tottenham	5	0.83
18. Everton	4	0.80
19. Barnsley	4	0.67
= Southampton	4	0.67

DEFENCE		
Goals conceded	Average	
1. Manchester Utd	1	0.17
2. Derby	3	0.75
3. Leicester	5	0.83
4. Arsenal	6	1.00
5. Chelsea	5	1.00
= Liverpool	4	1.33
7. Newcastle	8	1.33
8. Blackburn	8	1.33
= Crystal Palace	8	1.33
= West Ham	9	1.50
11. Aston Villa	9	1.50
= Tottenham	8	1.60
13. Bolton	8	1.60
= Everton	8	1.60
= Wimbledon	10	1.67
16. Coventry	10	1.67
= Leeds Utd	10	1.67
= Southampton	13	2.17
19. Barnsley	15	2.50
20. Sheffield Wed	15	2.50

CAUTIONS		
Cards issued	Yellow	Red
1. Crystal Palace	20	0
2. Sheffield Wed	14	1
3. Arsenal	15	0
= Coventry	15	0
5. Tottenham	13	1
6. Everton	12	1
= Leeds Utd	12	1
8. Chelsea	9	1
9. Southampton	10	0
= West Ham	10	0
= Wimbledon	10	0
12. Bolton	9	0
= Derby	9	0
14. Blackburn	8	0
= Leicester	8	0
= Liverpool	8	0
17. Newcastle	5	1
18. Manchester Utd	6	0
19. Aston Villa	5	0
20. Barnsley	4	0

OFFENDERS		
By team	Cards/players	
Arsenal	3Y Bergkamp, Bould	
Aston Villa	2Y Taylor	
Barnsley	2Y Sheridan	
Blackburn	2Y Fittcroft, Sutton	
Bolton	3Y Taggart	
Chelsea	2Y Wise, M Hughes	
Coventry	5Y Williams	
C Palace	5Y Tuttle	
Derby	2Y Eranio, Laursen	
Everton	3Y Bilic	
Leeds Utd	1Y+1R Kewell	
Leicester	2Y Heskey, Lannon	
Liverpool	3Y Ince	
Man Utd	1Y (6 players)	
Newcastle	2Y+1R Batty	
Sheff Wed	2Y+1R Carbone	
Southampton	2Y Monkou	
Tottenham	3Y+1R Edinburg	
West Ham	3Y Moncur	
Wimbledon	2Y Gayle	

REFEREES		
Cards issued	Yellow	Red
1. S Dunn	2	14
2. G Willard	3	18
3. P Durkin	3	18
4. M Riley	3	14
5. M Bodenham	3	14
6. J Winter	3	11
7. G Barber	3	12
8. P Alcock	2	8
9. P Jones	3	11
= U Rennie	3	11
11. G Ashby	2	7
12. A Wilkie	5	14
13. N Barry	3	9
14. M Reed	1	3
15. D Gallagher	3	8
16. K Burge	3	7
= D Ellery	3	7
18. G Poll	4	9
19. S Lodge	4	7

SCORES		
Goals		
Sutton (Blackburn)	7	
Gallagher (Blackburn)	6	
Wright (Arsenal)	5	
Bergkamp (Arsenal)	4	
Carlson (Sheff Wed)	4	
Harrison (West Ham)	4	
Valli (Chelsea)	4	
Wallace (Leeds)	3	
Blake (Bolton)	3	
Dublin (Coventry)	3	
Ferdinand (Tottenham)	3	
Patrescu (Chelsea)	3	
Players on two goals:		
Aspirilla (Newcastle)	2	
Beckham (Manchester Utd)	2	
Berkovic (West Ham)	2	
Dyer (C Palace)	2	
Elliot (Heskey and Walsh)	2	
Lacoste (Bolton)	2	
Huckerby (Coventry)	2	
Labouef (Chelsea)	2	
Ince (Liverpool)	2	
Lombardo (C Palace)	2	
Owen (Liverpool)	2	
Rademacher (Barnsley)	2	
Stuart (Everton)	2	
Yorkie (Aston Villa)	2	

SCORING TRENDS		
Goals per half	1st	2nd
Arsenal	7	6
Aston Villa	2	4
Barnsley	2	2
Blackburn	14	4
Bolton	3	2
Chelsea	10	7
Coventry	4	3
Crystal Palace	2	3
Derby	3	1
Everton	1	3
Leeds Utd	7	1
Leicester	2	7
Liverpool	1	6
Manchester Utd	3	7
Newcastle	3	1
Sheff Wed	2	5
Southampton	2	2
Tottenham	2	3
West Ham	3	7
Wimbledon	2	4

HOME		
Attendance	Average	% full

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Neglected winger regains old dash

One of the key characters in Newcastle's win over Barcelona was grasping a second chance

Sometimes, it looks as though he has been chased all his life. His eyes are sunken beneath those mirror sunglasses. His fine, high cheekbones give him a vulnerable, hunted look that makes the crowd love him. He has had his share of pursuers in these, the fledgling days of his career, people who have sought to slow him down with controversies. But in the space of 90 fizzing minutes on Wednesday night, Keith Gillespie outstripped them all.

Newcastle's 3-2 win over Barcelona at St James' Park might have been a personal triumph for the hat-trick hero, Faustino Asprilla, but it was a rite of passage for Gillespie, the relighting of a fire that had started amid the great conflagration of Kevin Keegan's wonderfully extravagant assault on the championship in the 1995-96 Premiership season but which recently had burned down to its embers.

Wednesday night was the night the young Northern Ireland winger seized his second chance after a brief but extravagant addiction to gambling had been given the full blaze of publicity courtesy of an agreed bookmaker.

Gillespie's weakness was the boredom and loneliness of a young man living away from home, boredom that led him to the bookmaker and some prodigious wagers. His friends and far-sighted sponsors, such as the sportswear manufacturer, Adidas, stuck by him and he kicked that habit long ago. His electrifying performance against Barcelona looked like another chapter in a morality tale that is moving towards a happy ending.

Before the first of Newcastle's Champions' League games rescued him, Gillespie, one of the last of the out-and-out wingers, one of those rare players who can take your breath away by outstripping his full back so comprehensively that his speed becomes a thing of grace and beauty, had only started two of Newcastle's five games this season. The form of Steve Watson at right wing back was making it hard for him to force his way into the team.

But Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, who takes his team to play West Ham United at Upton Park



Gillespie favours dark glasses, but his view of the world through them is much brighter now that his gambling habit has been tackled and he has once more become a player to be reckoned with

today, picked him as part of a tactical plan that outwitted his opposite number, Louis van Gaal, and Gillespie responded with the best performance of his career. His pace was exhilarating and his crosses, executed as he hooked his right foot round the ball, falling to his right as Trevor Francis used to do, seemed as though they had been guided by laser on to the head of Asprilla.

Those who were there were astonished at the way he

embarrassed Sergi, a left back who excelled against England in Euro 96, a defender who is regarded by Bobby Robson as one of the best in the world. Those of us who watched the highlights, clustered round a television set in a room underneath the main stand in Kiosco, gasped at the free-flowing simplicity of what he had created.

"It was one of my best games," Gillespie said yesterday. "I had heard a lot about Sergi. People were saying he was one of the best there was so it was good for my confidence to play the way I did against him. A lot of the credit has to go to the rest of the lads for the way they played."

"We did not give the ball away cheaply at all and we made it as difficult as possible for them. Everything just seemed to go right on the night for me and for the team as a whole."

"I have not been consistent enough in my play for a long time now but I hope that that is about to change. For most of the Newcastle players involved in it, the game on Wednesday night was the biggest match of their careers and I hope it will be a turning point in mine."

If public opinion on Tyneside counts for anything, Gillespie will get the even

break he deserves. People seem to like him instinctively, partly for his honest endeavour on the pitch, partly for his demeanour off it. Despite the brief batch of bad publicity he had last year, he is a quiet young man with a ready smile, a lilting Ulster accent and an open disposition.

In one of the local country house hotels yesterday, the bellboys watched dispassionately as Alessandro Pistone wandered through the lobby and into the car park but when Gillespie sauntered in out of the sunlight, their body language changed and they moved out from behind their desks and pressed his hand into theirs. The barman seemed to know him, too, and they laughed at an aside as he poured him an orange juice and lemonade.

Gillespie is 22 now but he still has a look of the young George Best, dark hair and slightly pinched, handsome face. Born in Bangor, in Co Down, was labelled the next Best, of course, when he played alongside Nicky Butt, Ryan Giggs and the Neville brothers in the Manchester United team that won the FA Youth Cup in 1992. A bright future at Old Trafford was being predicted for him

OLIVER HOLT



when Alex Ferguson sold him to Newcastle for £1 million in January 1995 as part of the deal that took Andy Cole to Manchester.

At first, everything went better than he could have expected. A fringe player at United with limited first team opportunities, he was established in the Newcastle first team by the start of the 1995-96 season as Keegan's team left United trailing in the race for the title. With David Ginola on the left wing and Gillespie on the right, they supplied Les

Ferdinand and Peter Beardsley with a constant supply of ammunition. The trauma of losing Cole was quickly forgotten and the Geordie fans took Gillespie to their hearts.

In the February of that year, though, it all began to unwind. Keegan bought Asprilla from Parma, a signing that left Gillespie out in the cold, destroyed the balance of the team and put Newcastle's championship aspirations on the slide. Then *The Sun* ran a front page exclusive revealing that the young winger had blown more than £60,000 in one week of gambling madness.

Since then, it all seems to have been an uphill struggle, a battle to regain the momentum that was lost. Last season, he started just 23 Premiership games and scored one goal and he was asked to play in the unfamiliar role of wing-back. This season looked as though it might be going the same way until Gillespie belatedly seized hold of the second chance he has been given and re-established his reputation on Wednesday night.

"The gambling was definitely a boredom thing," Gillespie says. "It is a lot easier for people who are married to go home to their wives or kids or whatever whereas I was going home to nobody. I'd finish



Gillespie unmasked: golf is now his preferred recreation

training at 12 o'clock and I'd go home and the afternoon would be my own.

"Everything to do with it was just down to sheer boredom. I didn't really have any mates when I first came up here but I've got round that now. I play a bit of golf and that. When I finished training, I used to just rush home whereas now I'll hang around and have a bit of lunch first. Generally, I just forgot about the gambling. It's hard at first. You're going home and you think 'I've got nothing to do'

but it's a good job and a nice life and that's the way I look at it. I'm so much happier about everything now. I'm just loving my football and using my pace. I know that nine times out of ten, if I knock a ball past a full back I'm going to get there first and I'm going to get across him. It's the most important thing for a winger. If I know I'm quicker than the full back, I've got him already."

They are chasing Keith Gillespie again now and this time he is revelling in it.

Cooper resigned to his fate

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

FEW tried harder than Colin Cooper to arrest Nottingham Forest's slide out of the FA Carling Premiership last season. He missed only two matches, one because of suspension, but his efforts were in vain. Now, only four months on, he is no longer wanted at the City Ground.

Even during the summer, when he signed a new contract, and then on the eve of the season, when he was given the captaincy after Stuart Pearce's departure to Newcastle United, Cooper believed that all was well. He was looking forward to the new campaign, albeit in the Nationwide League first division, and to playing a key role in Forest's swift return to the Premiership.

However, after sustaining a leg injury in a pre-season game against Leeds United, his troubles began. He missed Forest's impressive start — they won their opening six league and cup matches —

and only gradually regained his fitness. Though he is now available again, he has yet to be given a place even among the substitutes and is unlikely to figure in the plans of Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, for the home game against Portsmouth this afternoon.

"It meant so much to me when I was asked to take over the captain's armband from Stuart," Cooper, 30, said yesterday. "I was so proud and went into the season determined to do everything possible to make my time as skipper as successful as possible. The leg injury set me back and now I have to concede that I'm no longer in Forest's plans. It hurts, but that's the way it is."

Cooper, who joined Forest from Middlesbrough four years ago, has already attracted the interest of Everton, West Ham United and Sheffield Wednesday. Bassett, whose side has not won in four league and cup matches, will

be looking for about £2.5 million for the former England central defender, who won two full caps.

Bruce Grobbelaar, the former Liverpool goalkeeper, will embark on the next chapter of his colourful career if, as expected, he makes his debut for Oxford United against Sheffield United at the Manor Ground today. On Thursday, Grobbelaar and Hans Segers, of Wolverhampton Wanderers, were charged by the Football Association with breaching FA rules on betting.

As Grobbelaar, 30, arrived for training yesterday, he declined to talk about the charges. "I have no comment to make," he said. Oxford have secured his services on a match-to-match basis.

Fabrizio Ravanelli, the unsettled Middlesbrough striker, has promised to return to the club after failing to agree a move to AC Milan. He is due to arrive back on Teesside next week.

Celtic count their blessings

By A CORRESPONDENT

SUCCESS can sometimes be a burden in football as much as a boon. Celtic may have cursed their defeat in the Scottish Cup semi-finals last season but they may now be reflecting, as they look at the example of Kilmarnock, that the profits of such a triumph are double-edged.

The Scottish Cup winners will not face Dunfermline at East End Park until tomorrow, the fixture being put back 24 hours to allow Kilmarnock time to recover from their 3-1 Cup Winners' Cup defeat in Glasgow on Thursday.

It had been Celtic's problems in juggling European and domestic commitments two seasons ago, when they competed in the Cup Winners' Cup, that smoothed the way for Kilmarnock's temporary respite. Then, Celtic were forced to fulfil their Bell's Scottish League premier division obligations on a Saturday, fewer than 36 hours after stepping off a plane. It proved

costly. Not surprisingly, trips to far-flung Georgia and a five-hour delay at Charles de Gaulle airport, after meeting Paris Saint-Germain, left a heavy price to pay in trying to ease Thursday out of the system in time for Saturday.

Celtic found little sympathy from the Scottish Football Association in moving league fixtures back. Ultimately, they lost the championship to Rangers by a margin of four points, the sum total of the two disappointing draws that they achieved after their Cup Winners' Cup exertions.

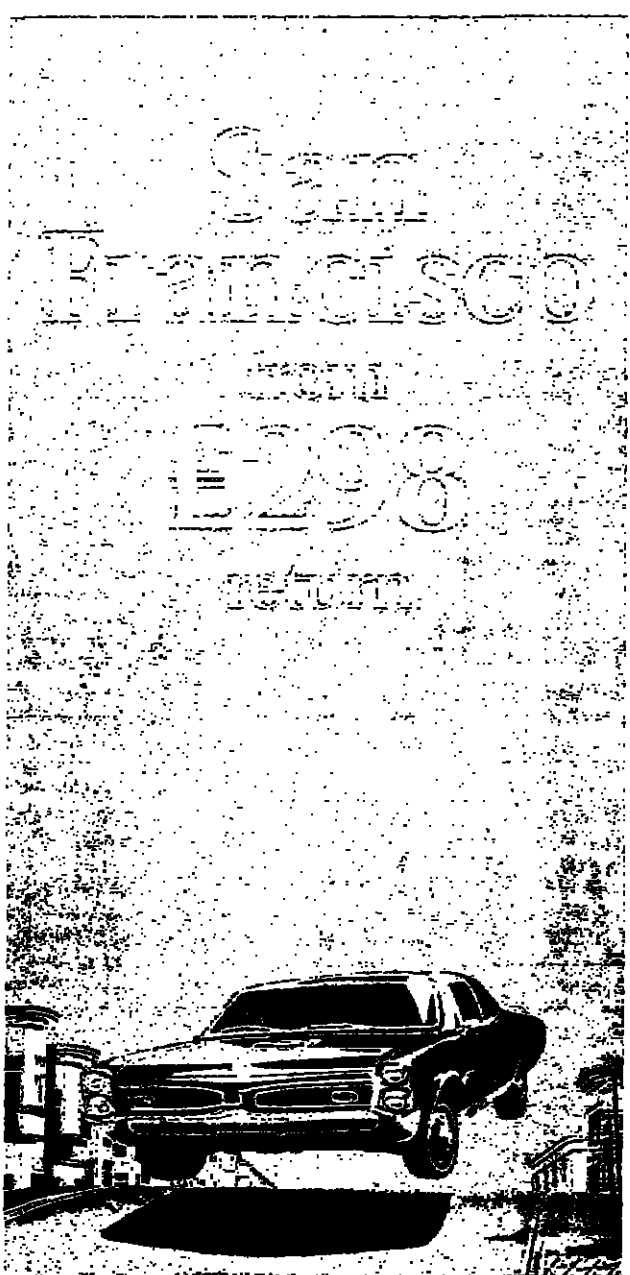
Then, as now, the pursuit of the title is Celtic's principal concern and their coach, Wim Jansen, must be thankful that his side's involvement in the UEFA Cup allows them a greater degree of recovery. Even allowing for the after-effects of their busy and adventurous performance in the 2-2 draw against Liverpool on Tuesday, Jansen's players

will be fully refreshed for the visit of Aberdeen to Celtic Park today.

Celtic have recovered from the two defeats that opened their league campaign to position themselves just behind their less-than-assured targets, Rangers. Their cause was aided by a 3-3 draw earned by Aberdeen at Ibrox last week, but now Celtic must avoid a similar fate if they are to prove they have genuine championship credentials.

Rangers visit St Johnstone with criticism ringing in their ears after another night of disappointment in Europe, this time a defeat by opponents Strassbourg in the UEFA Cup, that left their midfield player, Stuart McCall, complaining that the spirit at Ibrox is not what it once was.

Tomas Brodin, Leeds United's out-of-favour Sweden international, is expected to sign for Heart of Midlothian on loan and play against Dundee United at Tynecastle.



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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Why players would be better off concentrating on the training pitch and not the sports psychologist's couch

Therapy? It's all in the mind

BRIAN GLANVILLE



When I hear the word "culture", George Orwell said, "I reach for my revolver." I have the same reaction when I hear of sports psychologists, who seem increasingly in vogue. No disrespect to psychoanalysis, however unfashionable it may lately have become, but it is hard to imagine any leading psychoanalyst standing up at the British Association meeting last week, as Dr George Sik did, and making scarcely veiled assessments of Gareth Southgate and Stan Collymore.

Collymore appeared to be stigmatised as the kind of player "tense and sensitive to criticism, lazy and unwilling to take part in tough, physical exercise". The player was even said to have a "glamorous girlfriend". Collymore went on to have a dreadful game for Aston Villa against Bordeaux.

As for Southgate, Dr Sik suggested that, had he been consulted, this was the last player that he would have recommended to take that penalty in the European championship semi-final against Germany: a player "said to see himself as pessimistic and slow to make decisions. But because he was team-spirited, he was likely to volunteer to take penalties". And, so we are to believe, miss them.

What, though, of Stuart Pearce, that gung-ho competitor who missed from the spot against Germany in Turin in the 1990 World Cup? What of such different personalities as Roberto Baggio, the fantasist, and Franco Baresi, the indomitable warrior, who missed penalties in the 1994 World Cup final?

We have also heard how the Derby County sports psy-



It did not need a psychoanalyst to determine that Ravanelli's move from Turin to Teesside was always likely to end in tears

chologist, Bill Beswick, helped Chris Powell to score his first goal for the club, against Everton last Saturday. "He's been telling me it's not just my job to make goals but to start taking more responsibility myself," Powell said. Jim Smith, the experienced Derby manager, is no doubt advising Beswick on the niceties of the Oedipus complex.

Could a sports psychologist, could any kind of psychologist, help that emotional fellow, Fabrizio Ravanelli, who is now about to leave Middlesbrough, to decide where he should hardly have gone in the first place?

Juventus got rid of him, to his despair, because their manager, Marcello Lippi, was sick of being told to go to hell every time he substituted him. Ravanelli, caught on the emotional rebound, was summoned to Turin, impressed by Bryan Robson,

seduced by the reported £42,000 a week that he would earn and joined a club that had won nothing in its 120 years but the Amateur Cup twice, in the last century. What followed, followed: public contempt for training methods, clashes with colleagues, the excesses of a vulnerable, impetuous, insecure man, however accomplished a footballer.

I surely should not have needed any sports psychologist to have warned Robson about all that. The first of this breed I met was at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden. Brazil, disappointed by their failings at the previous two tournaments, had appointed him in the hope that he might help their less sophisticated players. When Brazil had thrashed Sweden in the final, he helped the players to carry the Swedish flag around

the pitch. Football's finest psychologists, though, have surely been its great managers. Between the wars, Herbert Chapman, of Arsenal, and Vittorio Pozzo, coach of the Italy national team, were supreme.

Chapman, needing a new right back, summoned George Male, then a young wing half, into his office. By the time that he came out, Male said, he was convinced not only that he could play right back, but also that he could be the best in the world. He won 19 caps for England.

Willy Pozzo, whenever faced with two players who had quarrelled in a league match, would always put them in the same hotel room. "Well, cannibals, have you eaten each other yet?" he would ask the next day. Shamefaced muttering would ensue: the players had been reconciled.

Dr Sik has also just co-



authored a book, *In My Head* (Headline, £15.99), with a ludicrous subtitle, "The footballer's mind revealed." However, the footballer in question is Pat Nevin, the former Scotland winger, who is far too bright, original and objective to be depicted as an average player.

Nevin, Dr Sik modestly points out, did not need an in-

terlocutor, and it is a pity that he got one. Nevin could have written a fascinating diary or an unusual autobiography. Instead, Dr Sik, who says he has tried to do what another psychologist successfully did with John Cleese, gets into the act *ad nauseam*. No diary, just a dialogue, in which Dr Sik's role is that of running interference.

Boris carrying can for failure

POOR old Boris Yeltsin, the President of Russia. Not only have a few of his nuclear warheads gone missing, but he is being blamed for his country's failure to qualify automatically for the World Cup finals in France next year. The 1-0 defeat against Bulgaria last week sentenced Russia to a play-off, which was too much for *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, the Moscow daily. "Soccer is too serious for 11 cool guys with fat-cat faces to spoil the mood of at least half the country," it ranted. "We can offer this free piece of advice to any future candidate for the national presidency — he would have no competition if by some miracle he could save Russian football from the abyss."



defeat, Santisteban claimed: "I can recognise at least eight of their players as members of the Ghana team in the 1991 under-17 championship." On that occasion, strangely, Ghana beat Spain in the final.

Continuing the World Cup theme, which country fielded the following side in its qualifying tie last week? (Clue: it was not Armenia.) 1. Sejus Givenas; 2. Garis Kelis; 3. Denisas Irvinas; 4. Janas Harrias; 5. Kenas Kuninghamas; 6. Rojus Kinas; 7. Dzeisonas Makaryris (sub: Filas Babas, 83min); 8. Alanas Makloughlinas; 9. Deividas Konolis (sub: Garis Brynas, 90); 10. Tonis Kaskarinas; 11. Styvas Stauntonas. Answer at foot of column.

Name-dropping

Football fans the world over love to have their favourite player's name on the back of their replica shirt. One fed-up Tottenham Hotspur and Darren Anderton supporter has, rather wittily, had the word "Injured" printed on his No 9 jersey. It is not known how much demand there has been for Noises, who plays for Tenerife, but curiously there have been no takers from the English-based fans of the Argentinian, Turido.

Sitting target

David Elleray, doyen of the FA Carling Premiership referees, let the train take the strain on his way to officiating in Manchester United's match against West Ham United at Old Trafford last Saturday. Unfortunately, "Lord David", as he is known by his Premier-league colleagues, had the uncomfortable misfortune, because of overcrowding, of having to sit on his kitbag in a carriage corridor. It was only after two hours, when the seats emptied at Stoke, that he was able to continue his journey in a more dignified manner.

Forever young

Juan Santisteban, the Spain coach, was not exactly brimming over with praise for Ghana, his side's conquerors in the semi-finals of the world under-17 championships in Egypt this week. After the 2-1

Beck's takeaway

John Beck, the Lincoln City manager, is known to favour the more unorthodox side of life — cold showers to inspire his players, etc — so it is no surprise that he has again bucked the trend by allowing supporters on to the team coach for away games. For £30 to £80, and the signing of an agreement guaranteeing good behaviour, fans can travel with their heroes. "Anyway, Robbo, talk me through that missed penalty..."

Answer to World Cup conundrum: Ireland, courtesy of the native translation by their Lithuanian hosts: 1. Shay Given; 2. Gary Kelly; 3. Denis Irwin; 4. Jan Harrie; 5. Kenny Cunningham; 6. Roy Keane; 7. Jason McAteer (sub: Phil Babb); 8. Alan McLoughlin; 9. David Connolly (sub: Gary Breen); 10. Tony Cascarino; 11. Steve Staunton.

New world on old foundations

The blinds are half-drawn, so we can see the day see-saw between summer and autumn. A battered car pulls up and a youth steps out. He is wearing a faded T-shirt and long, straggly hair.

A middle-aged woman walks her dog across the car park and fastens another button on her anorak as the wind picks up again. Life passes by, quietly, indifferent to the football ground it skirts.

Chris Patzelt — neat, light-coloured suit and Barnsley club tie — stares out across the car park. He smiles, breathes in the tranquility and remembers the day when bedlam came to Barnsley.

It was Saturday, May 17. Pocket diaries will reveal that it was a public holiday in Norway. Patzelt, Barnsley FC's assistant secretary, will tell you that it was a public anguish in Barnsley.

Season tickets were available to a select few from May 4, but, on May 17, they went on sale to supporters able to produce ticket stubs from ten of last season's home matches. This would seem to embrace a fairly elite group, but more than 3,000 were queuing outside the ground when Patzelt arrived — at 7.30am. "I turned around the corner in my car and thought, 'Good God, there was nothing else to think really'," he said.

During the previous evening, supporters had arrived at Oakwell with deckchairs, barbecues, crates of beer and sleeping bags. They were offered special passes for the next day to confirm their position at the front of the queue. They declined the offer; mistrust was in the air. "They actually wanted to stay at the ground overnight. I

Mark Hodgkinson looks at the way Barnsley have changed for the better

LIFE AT THE TOP



Barnsley emerge to start their great Premiership adventure

think they saw it as all part of the romance of promotion," Patzelt said.

Inevitably, as the deep queue snaked 400 yards around the ground, whispers circulated that tickets were about to run out. Furtive glances were exchanged between fans who feared the good ship Barnsley was to set sail without them.

Some waited for up to 14 hours, but, eventually, they all received a ticket. Nearly 17,000 were sold in total, providing more revenue for the club than in the whole of last season.

Patzelt is 37 and has spent all his working life in football. He is one of football's unseen, an administrator. He feels the glow of sporting glamour, but it is from a distance. His world is one of fax machines, letters,

invoices, safety drills, police inquiries, press inquiries, inquiries about inquiries.

He speaks in the jargon of the trade, of learning curves, contingency plans and prospective revenue figures, but he is also what is termed a "football man".

He enjoys the gossip of the game. He knows of former professionals who are now driving instructors and Country and Western singers; he can relate the sequence of scoring in Barnsley's first round, first-leg Coca-Cola Cup tie from 1996.

Barnsley have risen from relative obscurity to the FA Carling Premiership because Danny Wilson, their manager, has built a successful team, allied to a solid administrative back-up. "It is down to good management, good skill, a little bit of luck and a fair

degree of stability. A lot of it has really been common sense," Patzelt said.

The club began planning for life in the Premiership at the turn of the year, when the team maintained their position near the top of the Nationwide League first division. It has created a thousand extra problems, but there has been a rallying call within the club. "We all answer the phones and we stay until the job is finished. There's no real demarcation here," he said.

Barnsley are loyal to the stereotype of much-fabled Yorkshire thriftiness. The impressive East Stand was built for £2.65 million, which is, by today's standards, a good piece of business.

Other clubs were ringing asking how we got it for that price," Patzelt said, the pride in his voice palpable. "We only do a deal when it is right. We left it on the table for some time and eventually we got what we considered a good deal."

The administrative team reports to a board of directors, none of whom draw money from the club. These are traditional, noble patrons of the game, dozens of local family-run firms, each overseeing a separate branch of the club's functions. They are epitomised by John Dennis, club chairman and owner of a fruit and vegetable business.

Barnsley have scant trepidation of their new status. Patzelt can talk a good talk: it is his job after all, but there is a seductive charm in his confidence and it permeates the whole club.

As he speaks, a lorry passes by carrying asphalt. The car park is being expanded, another change, for the better.

REWARDING TIMES

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Thomas Cook

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TOKEN 11



50 CRICKET

Kent's title hopes fade as pitch eases

SPORT

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20 1997

SAILING 51

Whitbread crews buoyed up for the big race



Choice words add to intrigue as move to Jordan is confirmed

Hill tries to repair damaged reputation

FROM MICHAEL CALVIN IN ZELTWEG, AUSTRIA

AS IN all the best fairy-tales, the hero lived happily ever after. Damon Hill posed for the cameras with Eddie Jordan here yesterday morning to complete the formalities of a two-year deal that conventional wisdom suggests is worth £10 million.

The A-1 Ring, site of the Austrian Grand Prix tomorrow, is set in *Sound of Music* territory and the hills were alive with the sound of self-justification. The world champion spoke with special emphasis about "my choice", as if he felt the need to prove that he had been in control of his destiny.

Jordan admitted to a "certain amount of glee" at the confusion sown by the courtship process. He is a natural storyteller, a cross between Dorothy Parker and J. P. Donleavy, and he relished the tale of brokering the deal in a private jet, after Hill had been abandoned at Monza airport by Tom Walkinshaw, his employer at present.

When the film of rumour and innuendo, which clings to Formula One like grime to a bathtub, had been washed away, inconsistencies remained. Although agreement for Hill to partner Ralf Schumacher was reached on September 9, in a meeting at the Weybridge headquarters of Gallahers, the parent company of Jordan's principal sponsor, Benson and Hedges, it is understood that he did not sign his two-year contract for another eight days.

An immediate damage-limitation exercise was required, because Hill considered his reputation had been sullied by the perceived rejection by TWR Arrows and Prost, who issued statements curtailing their interest in him once it became clear that a decision on his future had been reached. Despite acting with the best of intentions, Hill's advisers had been outmanoeuvred.

History is rewritten on a daily basis in the paddock and alliances have the life expectancy of a mayfly. The sport enshrines some of the best traits in human nature: courage, intelligence and individualism, but also some of the worst — duplicity, mendacity and selfishness.

Jordan, who sold Hill his

first Formula Three drive in 1985, renewed contact with the world champion at Magny-Cours in late June, when fears that his team would be unable to retain Giancarlo Fisichella next season began to solidify. The pair talked informally, from the British Grand Prix onwards, and Hill met Hiroshi Honda, supplier of the Mugen Honda engines, at Spa a month ago.

The private plane journey after the Italian Grand Prix at Monza 13 days ago is the stuff of folklore. Walkinshaw, the Arrows owner, left in his executive jet at 4pm — 30 minutes before Hill, who was immediately offered a lift by a pilot whose aircraft had been chartered by GdZ Capital, a subsidiary Jordan sponsor.

"It was quite bizarre, really," Jordan said. "We didn't know Damon was on board until we climbed in. You could say we hijacked each other. We started talking and by the time we got off his move to us had been more or less finalised."

Hill obeyed convention yesterday, when he was shepherded down the steps of his new team's motorhome to face the obligatory media melee. He made all the right noises as he read from a hand-written statement that seemed to be the product of a corporate mind, rather than his gentle, self-deprecating character.

"I believe that Jordan Grand Prix have proved in 1997 that they are ready to take on the greatest challenge in world motor sport, to win the FIA Formula One world championship," he said. "I know that, together with the formidable ambition of Mugen-Honda, we will make a truly awesome combination. With respect to the teams who showed such interest in retaining my services for next season and beyond, I can only say thank you and I wish you all the best of luck."

Hill is an articulate man, who needs no scriptwriter. He was more revealing in informal circumstances later. "It's a bit far fetched to talk about winning the world championship next year," he said. This did not concure with his new employer's insistence that "we have hired him to win races and to win the championship. There is no other reason."



Hill, right, appears to be in tune with his new employer, Jordan, at their press conference yesterday

Jordan could be forgiven the excesses of his enthusiasm, though. Unlike many in the pit-lane, he has never succumbed to self-importance. As Hill said: "His team has the reputation of being a fun team, but they are very serious about their racing. I feel that in keeping with the real spirit of Formula One, something that has been lost in the past few years."

The signing of Hill represents a pivotal moment in the development of Jordan Grand Prix, which almost went out of business at the end of 1991 with debts of \$7 million. "When the writs were flying about at that time, I discovered the meaning of distress, rather than mere stress," Jordan said.

He was rejected by Hill last year, but could not afford the

luxury of bearing a grudge. "I don't think I've had to eat humble pie in any way," he said. "Last year we were not financially in a position to do a deal with Damon. This year

we are. We desperately needed his experience. If we cannot win races next year it will be a very, very bitter blow."

Hill will have equal status with the younger Schumacher.

PRACTICE AT THE A-1 RING

TIME: 1. H. Hill (Jordan) 1:11.527sec. 2. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:11.528sec. 3. R. Schumacher (Benetton) 1:11.529sec. 4. G. Fisichella (Jordan) 1:11.530sec. 5. M. Salvo (Williams) 1:11.531sec. 6. D. Coulthard (Benetton) 1:11.532sec. 7. M. Schumacher (Jordan) 1:11.533sec. 8. G. Berger (Williams) 1:11.534sec. 9. P. Dini (Jordan) 1:11.535sec. 10. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:11.536sec. 11. J. Alesi (Benetton) 1:11.537sec. 12. J. Trulli (Jordan) 1:11.538sec. 13. J. Agazzi (Williams) 1:11.539sec. 14. J. Montoya (Williams) 1:11.540sec. 15. J. Barrichello (Williams) 1:11.541sec. 16. J. Magnussen (Benetton) 1:11.542sec. 17. S. Nakano (Jordan) 1:11.543sec. 18. J. Montoya (Williams) 1:11.544sec. 19. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:11.545sec. 20. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:11.546sec. 21. J. Trulli (Jordan) 1:11.547sec. 22. J. Agazzi (Williams) 1:11.548sec. 23. J. Montoya (Williams) 1:11.549sec. 24. J. Barrichello (Williams) 1:11.550sec. 25. J. Magnussen (Benetton) 1:11.551sec.

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS (after 18 races): 1. M. Schumacher (Benetton) 57pts. 2. Villeneuve (Williams) 57pts. 3. Alesi (Benetton) 57pts. 4. Coulthard (Benetton) 57pts. 5. Coulthard (Benetton) 57pts. 6. Berger (Williams) 57pts. 7. Irvine (Williams) 57pts. 8. Fisichella (Jordan) 57pts. 9. O. Panis (Williams) 57pts. 10. Hill (Jordan) 57pts. 11. Trulli (Jordan) 57pts. 12. R. Schumacher (Jordan) 57pts. 13. Hill (Jordan) 57pts. 14. Barrichello (Williams) 57pts. 15. A. Wurz (Williams) 57pts. 16. Salvo (Williams) 57pts. 17. Agazzi (Williams) 57pts. 18. Montoya (Williams) 57pts. 19. Magnussen (Benetton) 57pts. 20. Nakano (Jordan) 57pts. 21. Herbert (Williams) 57pts. 22. Montoya (Williams) 57pts. 23. Villeneuve (Williams) 57pts. 24. Coulthard (Benetton) 57pts. 25. Trulli (Jordan) 57pts.

GRANDS PRIX TO COME: Tomorrow: Austrian (A-1 Ring). Sept 28: Luxembourg (Nürburgring). Oct 12: Japanese (Suzuka). Oct 26: European (Jerez).

FA considers action after 'bung' inquiry

BY JOHN GOODBODY

THE Football Association is today considering whether to charge leading figures in the national game after publication of the four-year "bung" inquiry has revealed "unacceptable and unsavoury activities" in transfer dealings.

The FA said that it was "bound to be deeply concerned" about some of the contents of the 350-page report of the Premier League. The inquiry was launched after a High Court case in June 1993, in which Alan Sugar, the chairman of Tottenham Hotspur, said that he had been told that Brian Clough, the former Nottingham Forest manager, "likes a bung". A three-man panel has examined 10,200 pages of evidence and interviewed 66 witnesses in an investigation that may eventually cost £1 million. Police and income tax officials have shown interest in the inquiry.

Officials of Nottingham Forest are particularly criticised by the panel, which consisted of Robert Reid QC, Rick Parry, the former chief executive of the Premier League, and Steve Coppell, the Crystal Palace manager.

The panel said that the regulations at the time that the investigation was set up "created a cult of dishonesty under which many transfers took

place with the assistance of agents/intermediaries. Those agents/intermediaries were paid for their services but, in order to get paid, they produced invoices that falsely recorded the work undertaken. The inquiry saw several examples of this." The Premier League has subsequently made changes to the transfer system with new rules on the

licensing and regulation of agents, the conduct of deals, the role of managers and independent auditing.

The game's integrity was dealt a severe blow in July 1995, when George Graham, the former Arsenal manager, now with Leeds United, was banned from football activities for a year for receiving £425,500 from Rune Hauge, a

Norwegian agent. Graham has always insisted that the payments were "unsolicited gifts", although the FA commission was satisfied that he must have known that they were connected with the transfers of two Scandinavian players to Arsenal.

The inquiry looked at another transfer involving Hauge. This was the move of

Alf Inge Haaland, from Byrnje FK, Norway, to Nottingham Forest in 1992, and concludes that "the irresistible inference" is that Ronnie Fenton, the Forest assistant manager, and Hauge "had agreed that out of the monies received by Hauge from the transfer, a substantial sum would be paid to Fenton."

Fenton, who is now coach-

ing with Floriana, of Malta, is also named in the deals that took Anthony Loughlan and Neil Lyne from Leicester City to Forest in 1989. The inquiry concluded that "there is direct evidence of a fraudulent arrangement by which Clough and/or Fenton acquired a substantial sum of money from the two transfers."

The report considered the responses it received from Paul White, the Forest secretary, and others involved in the transfer as "unreliable, partial and deliberately misleading."

In examining the move of Thorvaldur Orlygsson from Akureyrar, of Iceland, to Forest in 1989, the inquiry said it was concerned by the fact that the transfer agreement was signed by an unauthorised person (Fenton); the inconsistency concerning the timing of the increase of the transfer fee of the player from £150,000 to £174,000; and "the persistence of the stories that Fenton collected a substantial cash payments from the transaction."

Irving Korn, the Nottingham Forest chairman, said yesterday: "Our books are clean. There is nothing missing from Nottingham Forest money-wise. I will refute those criticisms about Paul White, but I do not want to say any more until I have studied the report."

THE SHERINGHAM TRANSFER

THE £21 million transfer of Teddy Sheringham from Nottingham Forest to Tottenham Hotspur in 1992 was one of the chief topics to be investigated by the inquiry. In 1993, Alan Sugar, the Tottenham chairman, alleged in the High Court that Brian Clough, then the Forest manager, wanted money for himself when transferring players.

A central role was played by Frank McLintock, the former Arsenal player, who was Sheringham's agent and who acted as a go-between in the deal with Terry Venables, then chief executive of Tottenham. The inquiry concludes that several witnesses "attempted deliberately to mislead the inquiry in their evidence" but points out that Clough played little or no part in the negotiations. The inquiry did not find that McLintock was culpable in his role.

Tottenham secretly paid £58,750 to First Wave, McLintock's agency, with £8,750 subsequently being returned to the club. The inquiry said: "We are satisfied that neither Venables nor anyone else at Tottenham or elsewhere had any intention of misappropriating that money following its return to the club."

However, the inquiry concluded: "In our view, Venables knew of the cash payment long before it was referred to on the Panorama programme" (screened in 1993). The inquiry alleged that Venables made "a deliberate attempt to distance himself from the payment in cash made to McLintock." The inquiry added: "Whilst the conduct of Mr Venables cannot be justified ... in our view, he regarded the obtaining of Sheringham's services as being essential. He did not ... intend to make any personal benefit from the payment of £50,000."



Clough: "no part in deal"



Sheringham: recruited

Maynard makes maximum impact on title race

BY ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

TAUNTON (second day of four): Glamorgan, with six first-innings wickets in hand, are 101 runs ahead of Somerset

GLAMORGAN attacked during the brief spell of cricket available to them yesterday with the intensity of a team refusing to allow the imponderables of weather and opposition to stand between them and their destiny. They thrashed 104 runs in 33 overs and, with the county championship ending tomorrow, the Welsh are now favoured to win it for the first time in 28 years.

While Kent were delayed by a spirited Surrey revival at Canterbury, where the game is evenly balanced, Glamorgan's frustrations were caused by steady rain. Play resumed at 3.50pm, in light that would normally have been deemed unplayable, but Matthew Maynard and Hugh Morris battled as if it was mid-summer with the local village side doing the bowling.

Scoring at seven runs an over, they took their third-wicket stand to 235, made in less than three hours, with sustained, electrifying strokeplay. Both made memorable centuries and Morris, who may retire after this match if a prestigious coaching job comes his way, remained to supervise the advance towards 350.

With maximum bonus points banked, three more than Kent have gained, Glamorgan lead the table by four points. A draw may suffice, but they have two days remaining to force the victory that would guarantee the title that there positive, all-round cricket deserves. Maynard has too often squandered the potential of his immense talent through impetuosity, but the captaincy may have been the making of him and this was surely the most fulfilling innings of his career. Yesterday he moved from 76 to 100 off only 18 balls.

When he was finally caught at slip off Shine, he had faced only 117 balls and struck 118 out of 142 in boundaries.

Cottee had no time to adjust to the gloom before he, too, was taken at slip but Croft arrived to give stoical support.

Under the skin of sport



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Gillespie hits his stride - page 54



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THE TIMES WEEKEND

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20 1997

Drinking is easy, tasting is a skill

Jancis Robinson reveals the secrets of the wine taster's job - one that needs true devotion and stamina

The single most extraordinary tasting I have ever been to was in 1986, organised by Hardy Rodenstock, a leading German collector and pop group promoter who has devoted much of his life and fortune to seeking out some of the finest wines in the world.

I'd met Rodenstock, in June that year at Mouton, where we tasted one of his "Thomas Jefferson bottles", bought by America's third and most wine-friendly president. The collection comprises 1787s and 1784s from the 18th-century precursors of Lafite, Margaux, Mouton and Yquem.

In December, 1985, Christie's sold one a bottle of Lafite 1787 for what is still a world record price, £105,000, to the late Malcolm Forbes. This would have worked out at about £15,000 a glass, had anyone actually drunk the wine, but Forbes chose to put the famous bottle on a suitably antique table in his Jefferson Museum, by a model of the great man.

The bottle stayed there for many months, admired as what must be presumed to be the world's greatest and certainly most valuable wine, until someone noticed that the heat generated by a nearby spotlight had shrivelled the cork, which had dropped into the wine, thereby allowing it to spoil under the full force of oxygen.

Thus did the world's most expensive bottle of wine become the world's most expensive bottle of vinegar.

Rodenstock had already tried one of his ancient Yquems but the tasting I attended was to be the first time a bottle of red wine from his Jefferson collection would be tasted. The flask-shaped Jefferson bottle, Branne Mouton 1787, had been shipped in six weeks previously to allow it to stand upright before opening and encourage all the heavy sediment one would expect to develop after all those

years in bottle to fall to the bottom. This posed a problem for the people at Mouton, because all their cellar staff were trained to put any bottle they saw standing upright on its side immediately (for the reason that became all too apparent at the Jefferson Museum), so this historic bottle had to be carefully locked away in the darkest recesses of Baron Philippe de Rothschild's personal cellar.

We all gazed at the bottle with its thick wax turban over the top before trooping back up into the light to watch the young sommelier put the precious bottle in to a bowl and then start to chip the wax off it. Then we all dashed awkwardly back down the steps with many a cry of "schnell, schnell!" to where the decanter had been left. The sediment-free wine was now trapped in a reasonably airtight container.

We tasted the wine in a light room overlooking the courtyard, the sommelier cradling the decanter and cleverly managing to share out the wine between so many of us. Just a look at the depth of its treacle-brown colour was enough to elicit a flurry of "extraordinaires" from the French contingent.

The pre-Revolution bouquet was reticent at first and then built up to a cloud of sweetness hanging over the whole room. The most extraordinary thing about how the wine tasted was its weight and intensity, almost as though it had at some stage in its life been very gently fortified (which it could have been, but none of us was going to give up a drop for the sake of cold-blooded laboratory analysis). Far from a fragile relic, this was a wine with real life and power, the bouquet, amazingly, continuing to blossom in the

Continued on page 2



Jancis Robinson recalls the tasting when "we sat down at about noon and rose from the table at one or two next morning. Sixty-six wines were served with a dozen courses"

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Why be a TOURIST when you can be a **Traveler**

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Whether drinking for work or pleasure, it is our sense of smell which tells us what a wine is really like, says Jancis Robinson

Lift that glass and taste it on the nose

Anyone who wants to learn to taste wine properly can, with the sole exception of that small proportion of the population who have a damaged sense of smell (the important sense for wine tasting). All it takes is sufficient interest to want to learn, to concentrate on what the nose and palate communicate and to try to log these sensations so that they can be recognised again.

For filing purposes it can help to attach a description to each sensation but it is only absolutely necessary for those who want a career as a wine commentator. The rest of the population can get by perfectly well with nothing more than grunts or moans.

There are all sorts of different reasons for tasting wine, and they entail different techniques and abilities. The most common sort of wine-tasting (as opposed to just drinking, which anyone can do) is the most admirable one, tasting for the purposes of pure pleasure.

The technique here is the much-debated swirl and sniff, encouraging the wine's volatile flavour messages, followed by a thoughtful mouthful, also swirled around the palate before being swallowed.

The essential questions are: "Is this fresh and clean-smelling?" "Do I like this?" (so you can pursue, or avoid, other wines like it); "What does the smell remind me of?" (trying to track relationships with other wines); "Are all the essential elements — acidity,



There are all sorts of reasons for tasting wine properly, and they entail different techniques. Expert wine tasters follow four steps: look, sniff, sip and spit

sweetness, tannin, alcohol — in balance?" and "Does the flavour linger after swallowing?"

Affirmative answers to the last two questions suggest the wine is good quality and ready to drink. Top-quality wines that are still very young, especially reds, tend to tan the inside of the cheeks like leather, thanks to their heavy charge of tannins, which are precipitated as sediment while the

wine matures inside the bottle. Everyday wines tend to leave little trace after they have been swallowed, whereas a mouthful of seriously fine, multi-faceted wine can still titillate the palate even a minute after it was swallowed. I have heard of some French tasters who keep statistical records of this for individual wines.

The greatest difference in tasting technique for work and play is the

crucial one for our health: we spit rather than swallow. I suppose I must have felt inhibited about spitting in public once but I cannot remember it. Nowadays it seems natural to cluster with my colleagues round a spittoon, writing notes, gargling and occasionally communicating with eyes, eyebrows and grunts above cheeks bloated with wine samples.

There are other practical differences between tasting for pleasure and for work. When assessing a wine, I want to be able to taste every nuance, so I tend to taste white wines slightly warmer than I would choose to drink them.

The one thing that most fascinated me about wine when I first started out was the science behind tasting, so I soon realised that the warmer a liquid is served, the more of the volatile aroma is given

off. And since flavour is best sensed using the nose (whereas texture is sensed in the mouth), it makes sense to err on the side of warmth when assessing a wine. (The converse is that aggressive chilling will rid a nasty white wine of its unappealing flavour.)

In practice, I tend to taste most wines at comfortable room temperature when I can. The classic wine-tasting scene, in a chilly

dank cellar full of barrels, is also the most uncomfortable. Your toes and your nose feel like ice. The wine tastes like chilled ink and it is too dark to see the colour properly. Such tasting as I do at home I do round our dining table, which is at one end of our kitchen. The conventional belief is that there should be as few distracting smells as possible in a room where wine-tasting takes place.

I am distracted by someone immediately lighting a cigarette while I am trying to taste a wine, but I think it is the sudden, intense smells that cause the problems. Just as people who live in a town producing something particularly smelly do not notice it, I think we all quickly get used to the smell of any room we are in. And in recognition of other tasters' sensibilities, I try not to wear perfume when I know I am going to be tasting wine with others.

There is no doubt, however, that our own natural aromas are quite powerful enough to be distracting. Someone at a wine-tasting will quite often hand me a glass of wine they find remarkable in some way, encouraging me to "taste (or smell) that". I always try to take the glass from them before raising it to my nose so that I am not distracted by the smell of their hands. Not that my hands and body are any less smelly than anyone else's, but my smell is the one I am used to, the smell I taste through all the time and therefore do not notice.

'The world's costliest wine became the most expensive vinegar'

Continued from page 1
glass, evoking "lovely coffee" for Rodenstock, sheer incredulity in me. In fact, the wine kept getting better for a full three-quarters of an hour after it was poured — an achievement even for a young wine.

I was back with the same gang of well-heeled sybarites the following September at the 1986 version of Rodenstock's annual tasting, this time at Château d'Yquem. This was by a very wide margin the most remarkable event of its kind, because if Rodenstock has a speciality in his cellar it is Yquem, the most glorious and long-lived of all sauternes.

We sat down at about noon on a crisp autumn day and rose from the table at one or two the following morning. Sixty-six wines were served with a dozen courses, by chefs shipped in from Germany and Bordeaux. There was not a spittoon in sight, but there was plenty of still spa water (Rodenstock had conducted a blind wine tasting to determine which one would suit the wines best).

The wines were of an order of greatness that would move any wine lover. We began with



Hardy Rodenstock, hosted a tasting of the oldest wine

four extremely rare dry German wines, including a bizarre, dry, late-picked 1976 Zeltinger Beernauslese Trocken; four grand crus white burgundies from the likes of Domaine Ramonet, and 16 — far too many — vintages of Yquem, the top-heavy dry wine made at Yquem in less successful years for sweet winemaking. All this was by way of a palate whetter for the first and most impor-

tant flight of Yquems: the big, almost blowsy 1976, an aggressive 1888, and an 1847 that was the star of the show, so vigorously sweet, round and rich, strutting its stuff right out to the outer reaches of the palate, a slightly passé 1811 and, the rarest of all these rarities, a blue-green flask on which had been engraved flowers, leaves, bunches of grapes and the arms of the Sauvage family, which owned Yquem before the Lur-Saluces took over in 1787.

Rodenstock had studied the archives of Yquem and knew that the Russian tsar had bought a barrel of 1847 Yquem for 20,000 gold francs. He'd also heard that there was a cache of tsarist treasures in what was then Leningrad (who does this man consort with?), so he went to work on the hunch that some of this wine might have survived, and, *voilà*, this single ancient bottle, glass already dated at mid-18th century. A wine perhaps 30 years old when our Branne Mouton 1787 had been made. There was a mutter that this was probably the oldest wine ever tasted from bottle.

We fell silent and watched the young sommelier tap gently at the wax seal. There was a squeal of delight and a clap as the cork emerged intact, only to crumble immediately but well away from the wine, which looked from a distance like young claret with its deep reddish colour.

Each table shared one of these glasses of unctuous history, creamy rich with a very slightly metallic edge that indicated it might just be starting to fall apart. This wine did not improve in the glass, it had to be passed round quickly, inhaled and shared like a sacrament.

The 1847 served next was the better wine, but it was probably exactly a century younger. By 4.30pm, with the autumn light fading, everyone was anxious to stretch their legs outside. But no. The chef looked anxious, tapped a glass and reminded us we must get back to our seats for the last course of the first quarter of our meal: *foie gras* sautéed with freshly peeled grapes, to be washed down by the ten-year-old infant 1976 Yquem.

The second session didn't begin until 6pm. I may have drunk far more than I had ever done previously before sundown, but I don't think I've ever left as much wine either. We'd had lobster and *foie gras* with grapes. With our giant bottles of 1966 red Bordeaux — including a jeroboam of robustly mature and healthy Canon and an imperial of surprisingly well-developed classic tasting Calons-Ségur (trumping a rather dull jeroboam of Lafite) — we had *côtes*.

There was a sudden change of mood with the next flight of wines: Rodenstock decided it would be fun to lay on a blind tasting of the finest red Bordeaux, ranging in vintage from a 1937 Latour to an 1848 Lafite. All I can tell you is that the 1921 Pétus and, almost as delicious, the 1921 Cheval Blanc were stunning, as was the 1929 Figeac. The 1888 Mouton (*our bonne bouche* after tasting the 1787 Branne



Château d'Yquem, the setting for one of the longest-ever wine tastings, is home to "the most glorious of all sauternes"

Mouton) and 1848 Lafite were pretty good, the 1878 Raussan Segla less so, like the 1929 Haut-Brion and 1934 Margaux, while the 1928 Trotanoy and 1937 Latour were disappointing.

Three tasters failed to identify a single one of these ten wines but, quite frankly, at this stage my palate had lost any edge. It might ever lay claim to.

After a break for aspirin, a truffle flan with an ink-black sauce was served with four more giant bottles of giant red Bordeaux. Then something amazing happened. We had all, by any standard, had quite enough to eat and drink. But three more reds were served, with our *Brillat Savarin*, of which the third was sensational. It was so complete, so creamy rich yet perfectly balanced and elegant, with both power and subtlety, that it completely revived even my flagging spirits. It was a jeroboam of Mouton 1929, made just seven years after the young Baron Philippe de Rothschild had taken over the property from his aunt. At this time wine was unfashionable in much of cocktail-sipping Europe, and illegal in the United States.

This felt like the final burst of energy that evening, but I was reckoning without the seven sweet wines served with the two sweet courses at the end. A deep ruby, complex, quince-like Wachenheim Goldbacher Gertmepel Trockenbeernauslese 1937 was the most reviving elixir one could imagine. Lively yet delicate.

There were three more wines from the Lur-Saluces stable, with a 1949 from Yquem's sister property de Fargues as introduction; richly burnished, attractive if slightly rustic in this company, with a bluer note at the end.

And then, our swansong into the rest of our lives, the last wines I would taste before returning to my more usual diet of Coonawarra Cabernet and Sainsbury's Corbières —



The raw materials that test the professional wine taster

two of the greatest vintages of Yquem, 1937 and 1921. The 1921 is conventionally the *prima inter pares* dark, brownish gold and fairly deep, already smelling spicily exotic, still hinting at something left unrevealed yet, that night, just starting to dry out slightly.

The 1937 had me completely smitten; so much more youthful and vivacious, absolutely intriguing and lovely yet with riches hidden behind more than seven veils.

You may feel that the tasting notes above hardly do justice to the great wines they attempt to describe. The reason is simple, if ignoble. I was exhausted and in my haste to reach my hotel bed, and oblivion, I mislaid my beautiful red tasting album with all its detailed, if increasingly untidy notes on these miraculous wines. Next morning I sat

in the departure lounge of Merignac airport feverishly trying to recall the tasting notes on every wine.

I still have those airport notes. Against the 1953 Pichon Lalande all it says is, "appalling to admit that I have absolutely no recollection of this wine".

Guessing a wine's identity on taste alone is one of the most impressive tricks any professional can perform: it is the defining act of wine expertise.

Wine outsiders are fascinated by it, presumably because it demonstrates skills they have never developed. Wine insiders call it blind tasting, a combination of one-third natural gift and two-thirds application, guided by varying degrees of luck. One would

naturally assume that tasting experience and a good memory were the most important elements in blind-tasting, but experience can be a real bind. I have never been as good at identifying wines as I was in the late 1970s when my palate memory (and actual memory) were uncluttered by accumulation. Every new wine made a crystal-clear impression and, since I had experienced so few of these impressions, it was easy to relate everything I tasted to just one of them.

After our first few tasting experiences, as we accumulate more impressions and increasingly discover exceptions to the rules that seemed so simple at first, our poor old palates and memories become increasingly befuddled. This is why we wine professionals make so many mistakes round the dinner table and why our partners tend to be so much better at guessing the wine than we are. It's their uncluttered palate memories.

Happily, although outsiders remember when the professionals get it wrong, insiders seem to remember when you get it right — mainly because they know how difficult it is. Notable feats are discussed widely; the odd bravura performance clings flatteringly to one's reputation for years.

Huge, communal wine-tastings became fashionable in the early Eighties. In 1983, in the space of a few months, I was invited to one giant overview of the 1961 vintage of top red Bordeaux, and then another of the 1959, both great years and mature enough to be worth "looking at", as the wine trade euphemism has it.

But the tasting that pushed me to the limits of endurance took place in 1980 when I was invited to taste well over a 100 four-month old Beaujolais, from many a cuvée of simple, acid stuff from the flatlands up to the most majestic wines from the best villages, the so-called Beaujolais crus such as Morgon, Moulin-à-Vent and

Brouilly. Now, it is one thing to taste 100 wines from very different grapes and places — even the standard range of top red Bordeaux encompasses merlot and two sorts of cabernet, as well as many different terrains — but it is quite another to douse your palate in more than 100 young gamays all produced within 15 miles of each other.

Nowadays, I often taste more than a 100 wines at a time — particularly when Britain's main retailers hope to please us wine columnists with as many of their lines as possible. This is much less demanding than tasting 100 Beaujolais of the same vintage.

All sorts of external factors can affect both tasting ability and how one feels afterwards, as well as the important internal factor, one's mood. You need to be willing to concentrate to taste well; drinking is easy but tasting is a skill. I remember one blind tasting, organised when I was about to go and choose my wedding dress, and I just couldn't master my tasting faculties at all.

The weather, and in particular the atmospheric pressure, has a huge effect on tasting. On a muggy or damp day, you feel more sluggish and the volatile smell messages are much less ready to leave the glass and soar up your nose. On a bright, crisp day, on the other hand, everything — including smells, flavours and the senses — seems much sharper and more intense.

Over the years I have devised my own simple pleasure meter for tastings of grand wines. If most tasters approach the table with a smile, then I'm sure to enjoy it. If, on the other hand, most of them look gloomy and suspicious, then this is not a tasting for me. And now that I often lead wine-tastings, I try to remind amateurs that the point of wine is to give pleasure and that they should approach the wines with that in mind.

I think many amateurs are wary of wine-tastings, feeling almost that it is they who are on trial rather than the wine. The ideal tasting squeezes the most pleasure out of every wine and every taster.

● Extracted from *Confessions of a Wine Lover*, by Jancis Robinson, to be published by Viking at £7.99 on October 13.
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*Source: Mintel 1996.

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TM20/9

When Max Clifford needs sports kit he knows where to go, says Michael Cable

Life is one big game

my favourite shop

Pose for pictures in a Chelsea soccer strip? The publicist Max Clifford gives a world-weary smile. "If that's what you want, yeah — I don't mind," he shrugs. As it happens, Morden Sports, at Morden in Surrey, is clean out of Chelsea strips. "Big run on them this season," says the proprietor John Hardiman. "Our entire stock of 300 sold out in four hours."

The last time there was this much interest in Chelsea's kit was when it was revealed as the preferred bedroom attire of the soccer-mad ex-minister David Mellor in the kiss 'n' tell story from his mistress Antonia de Sancha, orchestrated by Clifford in his capacity as de Sancha's agent.

"A good sport" is probably not the phrase that Mellor, fellow ex-Tory MP Jerry Hayes or MP Alan Clark, among others, would choose to describe the man behind the tabloid scandals of which they have been victims.

Yet sport is important to 53-year-old Clifford. He was a British water polo international and a Surrey county soccer player in his day and still swims and plays tennis three times a week. "I've always been sporty," he says.

He and Hardiman met playing football as teenagers for their south London side, Raynes Park Rovers, and since Hardiman opened Morden Sports 20 years ago, Clifford has been a regular customer. As well as shopping there for his own sports kit he also takes along a group of neighbourhood children that he has, for years, regularly taken to the local David Lloyd centre to swim and play tennis.

This sort of public-spirited attitude seems at odds with his professional reputation as a master of PR hype, cheque-book journalism and sleaze management. "It's a side of him that people don't know about," says Hardiman. "He does a lot for charity that he never talks about."

This includes giving all his television interview fees and part of his earnings from after-dinner speaking engagements — he is more of a celebrity than many of his clients — to the Children's Cancer Unit of the Royal Marsden Hospital. He also delights in persuading stars such as Muhammad Ali, George Michael, Fat Cash and Mr Blobby to join him in visiting the young patients there. With a grown-up daughter of his own who has been severely disabled since childhood with rheumatoid arthritis, he is especially sensitive to the needs of sick children.

Clifford's high profile as a publicist really dates from his involvement eight years ago in helping to expose the Pamela Bordes scandal — she was a researcher for MPs at Westminster who was said to have had links with high-ranking Libyans, and also to have been working as a call girl. Since then, everybody with a juicy story to sell seems to have been beating a path to the door of his office in New Bond Street, central London.

At the same time, others hire him to keep their names out of the papers. Mohamed Al Fayed approached him unofficially to "keep an eye" on Diana

and Dodi. "I think they probably would have married," says Clifford. "I spoke to Dodi on the Thursday before the accident and he told me 'If we are still together at Christmas, we'll be together for the rest of our lives'."

He doesn't think their deaths will have much effect on the way the press treats celebrities. "They say they are going to stop using paparazzi pictures but when somebody comes up with an incredible picture that everyone wants, they will find a way to use it."

Clifford attempts to justify and even dignify some of his own sleazier tabloid coups as a crusade against corruption and hypocrisy in the Establishment generally and the Tory party in particular. "It's not a moral campaign," he says. "Some of the nicest people I know are adulterers. What I object to are the double standards of people who do that sort of thing while at the same time preaching the back-to-basics line."

Having declared war on Tory sleaze, would he pursue New Labour offenders with the same zeal? "If they were corrupt, yes. If I thought they were doing a good job I'd just phone Peter Mandelson and mark their cards, warn him about what they were up to."

He has had death threats, he says. And he knows his phone has been



Max Clifford, in John Hardiman's shop in Surrey (above), says sport gets him "away from it all"



Get kitted out for almost any sport, but don't look for a Chelsea strip — they sold out within hours

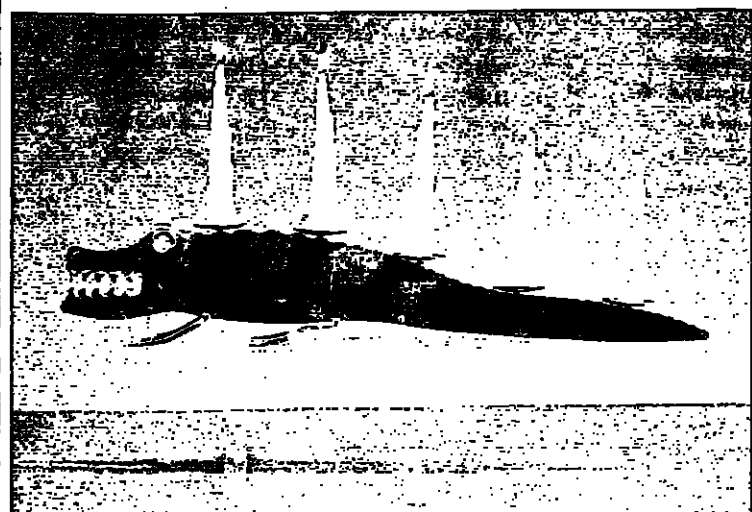
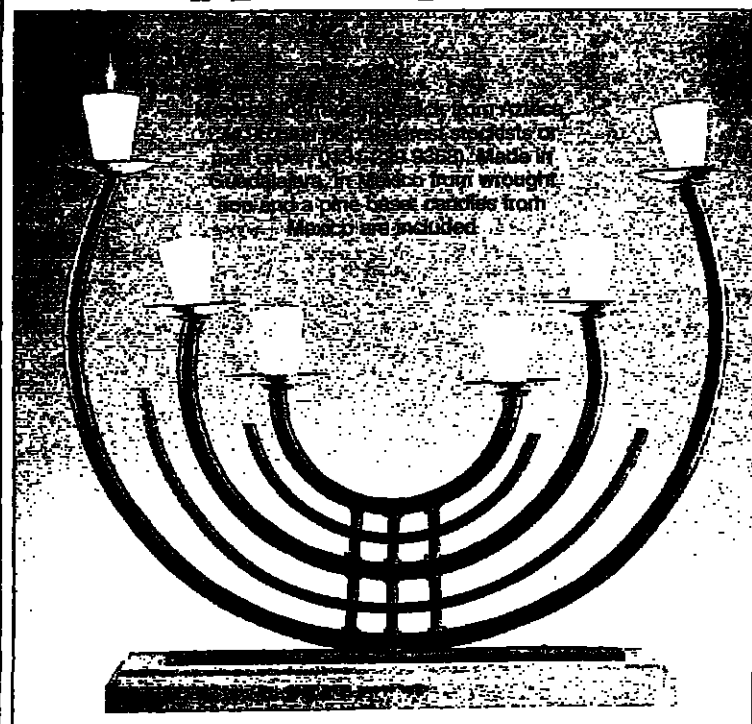
tapped. But he is still happy in his work. "I know I played a part in the last election by highlighting sleaze and I'm proud of that," he says.

Sport, meanwhile is his way of getting away from it all. "There is an honesty in sport that you don't get in

the media, and a reality that you don't find in the entertainment world," he says, swinging a tennis racket experimentally. "That's what I love about it."

● Morden Sports, 6 Crown Parade, Crown Lane, Morden, Surrey (0181-540 3976).

Dipped lights to wax lyrical over

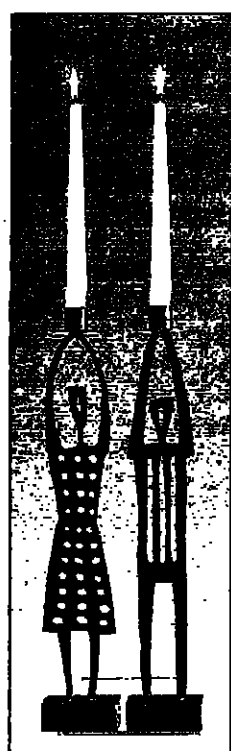


ABOVE: Doctor Croc Candlestick, £57.50 plus £4.20 p&p by Richard Pell (mail order, 0181-678 0800). A fun candlestick for the die-hard, bad-taste guru; use it to scare unwanted cats from the garden! Made from mild steel with bronze teeth

CANDLESTICKS

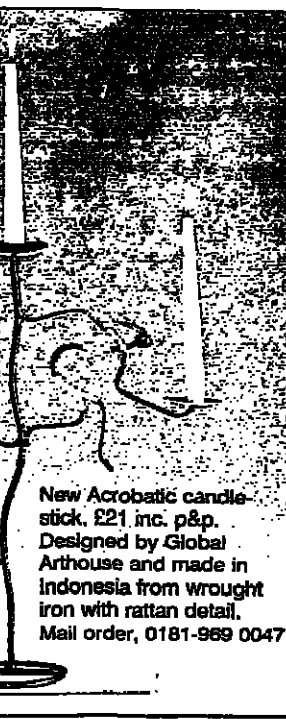
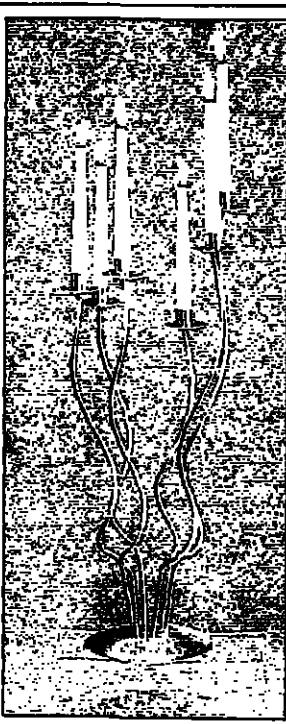
After dark, chase away the shadows with this season's contemporary candlesticks. Bring ultramodern chic to your dining table with candle stands crafted in everything from glass to metal. Once you have chosen a candlestick, your next problem is finding the right candle. The choice can be confusing, with everything available from aromatic to hand-clipped. Always go for a quality brand like Prices, and beware of any aromatic brands unless you have tested them before, or your house may end up smelling like a perfume parlour.

CAROLINE GRIFFITHS



ABOVE: Man and Woman candlestick by Berg and Lindberg from £49 (Sweden). 00 46 278 41710. Add a bit of fun to your mantlepiece, also available in miniatures

RIGHT: new range Seaweed candlestick, £45 incl. p&p, from Space Appeal (mail order, 01277 366610). Designed by Greg Foremski, made from steel, a blunt instrument will get rid of dripping wax and it should be cleaned with a soft cloth



New Acrobatic candlestick, £21 inc. p&p. Designed by Global Arthouse and made in Indonesia from wrought iron with rattan detail. Mail order, 0181-989 0047

BARGAINS

THE first surprise in Eton is that the car park costs only £1 for three hours — leaving £99 and 180 minutes to spend on bargains. After pouncing on a pair of New and Lingwood wooden shoe trees at £19.95, I invested in a cricketer's sun hat at Welsh & Jeffries & Weatherill for £5, and for £6.95 had my beard trimmed at Taylor of Old Bond Street (est.1854). At Asquith's, the first teddy bear shop in Britain, I found a six-inch bear for £1.50, and a bear deckchair for £5.95. At Radnor's Traditional Menswear I got a Van Heusen shirt for £17 and, for £6.50, the lapel badge of my alma mater, the



Selection of badges from Radnor's, Eton

Royal Logistic Corps. On to Cat Out of the Bag, where I found an umbrella with cat motifs for £10.99 and two one-inch pewter cats at £2.50 apiece, and a stoneware cat cord-pull for £4.20.

In the window of John Walls Bespoke Tailoring was a poster for "The Owl and the Pussycat" — an evening of nonsense verse — in Windsor Castle on October 8. I bought a ticket for £5. With £16 left I went to Mostly Boxes where Victorian photographs are from £1 to £6. Best of all would be to hit Studio 101 where the ceramic phrenological head is already cheap at £22, and then haggle for it.

COLIN STEEL

GADGETS

PLAYING Cowboys and Indians once seemed a fairly innocent pastime, but most parents today flinch at the thought of toy guns. A harmless substitute is Tiger Electronics' Laser Tag, which has been purposely designed so as not to resemble a gun.

With the two wrist-mounted units you can play infra-red tag up to a range of 100 feet. Squeezing the trigger brings futuristic laser sounds and the chance to zap any nearby units. Each receiver takes only so many hits before being rendered inactive. Pressing another button when opponents are in range activates a force field to block momentarily the invisible radio beams.

My two young testers deemed Laser Tag the coolest game of the year. It has also never been easier to get them running around outside in the garden even when it is raining.

Laser One is a motorised unit with a



Laser Tag: its radio beam zaps opponents

real laser in it. Its built-in microphone picks up bass beats in music to generate "dazzling images" projected on to a wall or ceiling. The results are mildly entertaining and the patterns made by the ever-moving laser dot have a good knack of fitting in with all musical moods.

However, your neighbours may not appreciate music played loud enough to drown out the constant whirr of the motor. The battery compartment might also cause problems, since it is kept closed with a fiddly screw.

TIM WAPSHOTT

● Laser Tag, £49.99, from Tiger Electronics (01423 501151) for stockists. Laser One, £99.95 plus p&p, from the Gadget Shop (0182 860860).

Dolle
beauti
China

سكزا من الاطعمة

Orient-inspired shapes in jewel-bright silks and damask can spice up your wardrobe, writes **Heath Brown**

Dolled up beautifully, China style

Chinese whispers heard from top designers in the summer have grown into a chorus of approval from the high-street stores this autumn. The look heralded by Miuccia Prada is echoed by Warehouse, Oasis and Freemans, in traditional shapes and with more modern silhouettes taking on an exotic oriental look in Chinese-inspired fabrics.

With Shanghai-style cheongsam dresses slit to the thigh, loose satin jackets and rich Chinese damasks, the oriental influence is growing even stronger this season.

Sensual and elegant, it is a favourite look of supermodels and movie stars — Kate Moss has been spotted hunting through the rails of London's Chinatown for an authentic "Suzi Wong" dress and Madonna has a penchant for the look — though she favours designer labels such as Dolce & Gabbana and Dior.

With embroidery and pattern being a very important look for this winter, the richly coloured brocades and damasks and all-over embroidered silks and satins are a good way of modernising an outfit. Oriental styling coupled with Far Eastern imagery of willow-pattern designs, delicate flowers and tone-on-tone leaf-and-branch motifs is widely available and provides an easy way to add spice to your look.

Even the most basic items of clothing are made more special with a hint of chinoiserie. Simple single pieces are enlivened with the look and can be worn with plainer separates for a more sophisticated edge. Stunning cigarette trousers are made elegant in rich brocades, no-fuss shell tops are given added glamour for evenings, and skirts with mandarin-collar jackets are a softer, more feminine alternative to severe tailored suits.

For accessories, all manner of items have been given the oriental treatment. The best are from Warehouse. Accessorize and Audrey Ang, who is a graduate of Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. Along with her small capsule collection of clothing, Ang offers a wide range of simple evening bags, purses, stoles, chokers and hair accessories with an oriental feel.

Ang says that the Far Eastern look of her accessories is perfect for any time, any-



Silver floral-print top, £34.99, Oasis, branches nationwide (01885 881986). Chocolate brocade trousers, £45, Lipsy, Topshop selected branches (0171-263 6206)

where. "Our hand-dyed Chinese fabrics are made up into simple styles that are suitable for the day as well as being great for the evening."

"Whether you wear a single piece of clothing or just a dash of an oriental accessory it can add a feeling of rich, exotic glamour to any outfit. It is great with the blacks, greys and muted colours around at the moment — or even with casual denim. It can lift an otherwise drab ensemble."

This is the whole point of the look, adding to your style but not letting the Chinese look take over. Don't wear it head-

to-toe: save that for a fancy dress party.

Fit is important, too. With these styles being mainly in embroidered satin, a clean line is essential. Overtight wrinkles draw attention to bulges and loose-fitting satin jackets can be a little too "kung fu". The stretch fabrics in this style are best. Check out the offerings from Warehouse.

As Eastern influences are adopted by Western designers, fashion takes on an air of the mysterious. Listen to the Chinese whispers and put a little oriental style into your wardrobe.



Wine stretch vest top, £18; floral print trousers, £50; both at Warehouse (0171-278 3491). Red silk slingbacks, £99, Kurt Geiger, 49 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-546 1888)

THREE OF A KIND

THE Far East heads West as all manner of footwear gets the oriental treatment. Here are three of the best shoe styles in rich, colourful Chinese damasks. HB



Embroidered gold and black dragon red satin shoes, £180, Patrick Cox, 8 Symons Street, SW1 (0171-730 6504)



Chinese print silk stilettoes, £140, Agnes B, 111 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-225 3477)



Chinese print platform mules, £49.99, Office, 57 Neal Street, WC2 (0181-838 4447)



ABOVE: sleeveless polo-neck top, £20, Warehouse, as before. Rose-print skirt, £30, Freemans mail order (0800 900 200)

LEFT: rose neck choker, £55; midnight blue silk capsule top, £185; matching skirt, £195, Audrey Ang, The Cross, 141 Portland Road, London, W11, also mail order (0171-727 1515). Black velvet high-heel shoes, £99, Kurt Geiger, as before

Photographs by Richard Burns. Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Harstford (0171-495 7774). Styling by J. Mandip Uppal

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IS OPENED
EVERY 10 SECONDS.



CANARD-DUCHÊNE. CHAMPAGNE SANS FORMALITÉ.

An interior designer's grand plan for outdoors

ME AND MY GARDEN: DAVID HICKS

Jane Owen
meets a man
who is
changing the
landscape

David Hicks swings the Range Rover across a ditch to give me a closer look at the vistas he has made on his Oxfordshire landscape. "Sorry about the ride: treat this thing like a horse," he says as we hurt past clumps of young beech, oak, Scots pine and hornbeam planted, Capability style, around his Gothicised farmhouse.

Mr Hicks's garden proper is two and a half acres but, by making vistas in every direction from the house, the garden seems to stretch for miles towards the Cotswolds in one direction and Didcot power station in the other. Several fields around the garden are planted with flax to "paint the landscape blue for a few months".

Sixteen years ago Mr Hicks, whose father-in-law was Lord Mountbatten, was an interior designer. Then he moved from his large house with its untouched 18th-century landscape garden to the present house nearby, where "everything had to be done to the garden".

Today the garden is the antithesis of English twee-ness. It is all muscle and discipline and massiveness. And perfection.

Thousands of trees make the well-formed skeleton of the garden. From the dining room, the swimming pool — painted black and disguised as a canal — is flanked on two sides by hedges of lime. The vista continues to the brow of a rise marked by a couple of eye-catching battlements. They are fake: plywood cut outs.

Another eye-catcher, a large pyramid shape on a horizon is on wheels and has caused much

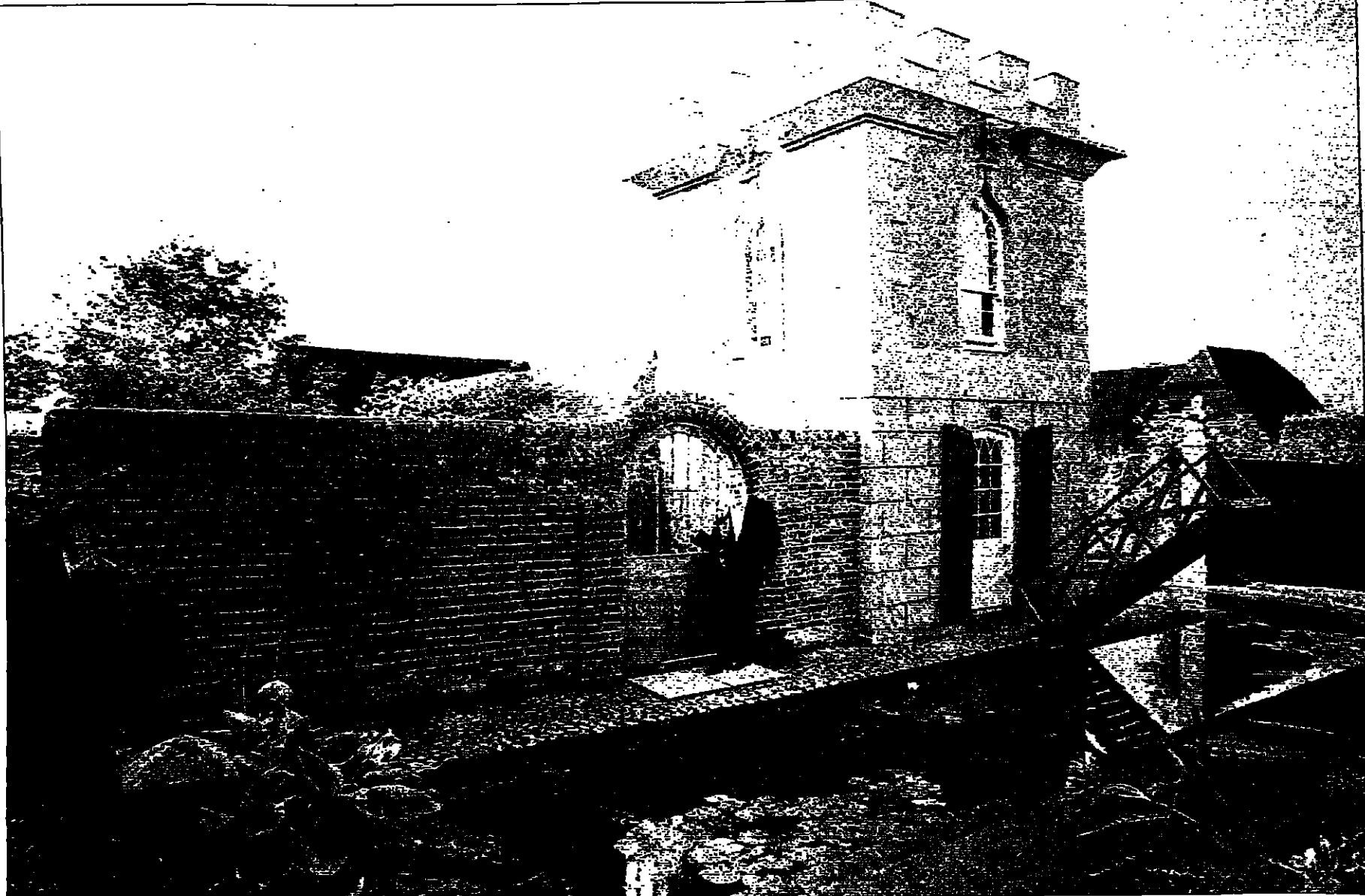
debate in the area: the local newspaper asked readers to suggest what it was. Replies included a UFO and a yacht.

From the double-storey drawing room a vista is flanked by closely planted hornbeam on stilts, with a hornbeam hedge behind to show off the aristocratic "legs" of the hornbeam. Two fine classical urns punctuate corners where the hedge makes a right angle. The urns are placed so they cannot be seen when looking back at the house for fear that they would look daft beside the "ramshackle" farmhouse.

Up the rise, a Gothic "tent" of hornbeam and small beech enclosure to either side make hiding places for the Hicks's four grandchildren. Beyond this stretches a 90-tree Spanish chestnut alley with a 50ft span.

Behind this vista Mr Hicks has made a series of garden rooms and allees of willow, rose, honeysuckle and hornbeam. One garden room is planted with several varieties of *Magnolia grandiflora*.

To the front of the house, Versailles tubs are planted with cubes of pink-flowered hawthorn, held aloft above tiny hedges made up of 16 beeches. Who else but a



David Hicks's crenellated tower folly, with its canal "moat" and drawbridge, was a sixtieth birthday present from his wife, and leads through to his "secret garden"

interior designer could have thought of such a wheeze?

Gardening runs in the veins: Mr Hicks's mother and father were keen; his mother "pinched cuttings" and his father, a Victorian, delighted in brightly coloured bedding, making Mr Hicks's childhood garden one that he hated. At eight years old, he was given his own plot and planted "bright red geraniums and anything else that appealed to vulgar taste".

At 18 he became a marked man. He visited Sissinghurst garden in Kent, and, as he sat and sketched, he was tapped on the shoulder by Vita Sackville-West, who took him

in for tea. "I am not a plantsman, I am a designer. If my wife was a plantswoman maybe I should have had a partnership like that of Harold Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West, and this garden would have been better," he says. I doubt it. Only an unshackled garden autocrat could have come up with such a remarkable, bold style.

At the front of the house in spring is a wave of daffodils. "I hate them but they were here when we came and the wife likes them so they stay," he says. It is hard to imagine Mr Hicks making many such compromises.

A two-storey, moated, castellated tower folly, a sixtieth birthday present from his wife, leads through to Mr Hicks's "secret garden", where tree peonies, roses, lilies, poppies, stocks and hostas run voluptuous riot. Scent and romance gather here, all the more shockingly in contrast to the formality of the rest of the garden.

Outside the secret garden is another inspiration: huge faux terracotta tubs of parrot tulips are sunk at regular intervals into a rectangle of clipped hawthorn measuring 20ft x 10ft x 3ft. In summer, the tulips are replaced by globe artichokes. There is a "red room" of copper beech; a "green room" of

lime and foxgloves, with two Lutyens benches; a corridor of box clipped into geometric shapes ending with an eruption of angelica; a rose walk of the shocking pink rampant rambler American Pillar. One area is thick with great terracotta pots of hostas. "If you smear Vaseline around the base of a hosta when it has just come up the slugs won't get it," he claims, adding: "That's the sort of tip the groups I show round love. I get about 600 people a year."

As we walk, Mr Hicks constantly picks up garden debris and shouts out suggestions and commands to his gardeners. He makes things happen — fast. Even the plants have to get their acts together at speed, so his farm's manure is supplemented by Growmore.

My question about how he uses the garden — does he sit in it? — is greeted with a polite snort: he is too busy whizzing around the world making gardens for other people. "Now I do more gardens than interiors. I made this garden and it was photographed and then I kept getting commissions," he says.

Specialist societies wishing to visit Mr Hicks's garden may be able to do so by booking a year in advance on 01491 824555.

India Hicks, fashion model Magazine, page 36



David Hicks framed against a gate leading into his garden

GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q Our 35ft eucalyptus tree is covered with ivy up to the last 10ft. The leaves and branches at the top seem healthy but will the ivy kill the tree? How do we remove the ivy? — W.R.G. Benyon, Bebington, Wirral, Cheshire.

A There are always differing opinions about allowing ivy to colonise trees. Mine is that on strong, mature trees it does no real harm: it houses bird life and, on old trees, looks picturesque; flower arrangers kill for the mature foliage and it turns a deciduous tree into an evergreen presence. On young or weak trees, and on evergreens or fruit trees, I like it less. The weight of mature foliage is considerable and, when topped with snow, can cause breakages. It does not so much strangle trees as deprive them of light. But eucalyptus trees grow so fast that they should be a fair match for ivy. Although your specimen is two-thirds covered, it will still lead the race. However, eucalyptus tend to be bare trees towards the base anyway, and you may find that a colony of ivy will finish off your lower branches altogether.

The best option is to cut the ivy trunk and the base, but also cut out as much top growth as you can reach with ladders, to make it look less sad, and to let the light and air into the tree again. This would be my preference. There is no real need to strip out every last stem of ivy from the tree, but it is worth destroying the root unless you are prepared to peel off fresh attempts to scale the tree every winter. We should all think hard before allowing ivy to colonise a tree in the first place.

Q I have lots of foxgloves and last year bought 'Giant Spotted', which flowered beautifully and died. I saved seed and grew it on and planted the seedlings out this year. But

the new plants have not flowered, although all the other foxgloves in the garden are doing well. Will they flower eventually, or is there something in the breeding which prevents this? — Miss P.A. Peverett, Ruislip, Middlesex.

A The common foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*, is a strange thing. We regard it as a biennial, making a rosette of leaves in year one and flowering and dying in year two. But, in fact, it is a short-lived perennial. Plants will survive for a few years, especially if you cut off the flower spikes after they have bloomed and spare the plants the effort of producing all those millions of seeds. They also seem to last longer in poorer, drier soil. And often they can come up to flowering in their first year.

Your hand-raised plants are just being picky. Perhaps being raised in pots at the end of last year checked their root growth, and has made them concentrate now on consolidation rather than procreation. Rest assured, next year they will flower, and they will be bigger and better for having simply grown hard this year. I would not trouble to hand-raise new plants, but would make sure I scattered the seed widely in the garden, and weeded out some of the less exciting ordinary ones.

Did you know you can select foxgloves in purple and white mixed colonies to be just white, simply by removing the purple ones before they flower? This practice is helped by the fact that the whites have distinctly paler foliage, even as seedling plants, and long before flowering.

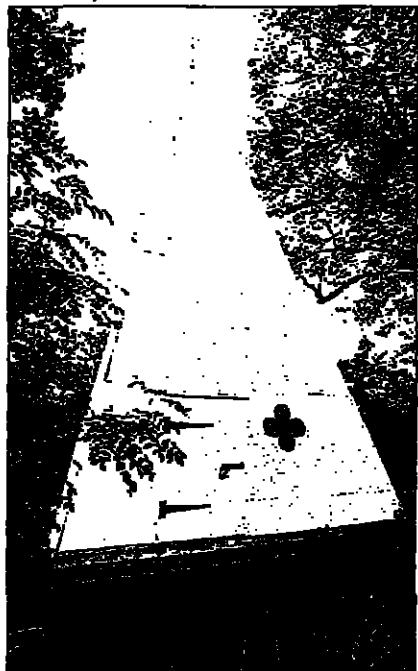
Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9NN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.



Above: one of the several allée vistas, here seen through trelliswork



Left: among the garden's statuary are staddlestone pillars, each topped with cast-iron balls



Right: this strange pyramid on wheels (one of two) causes much local debate. Is it a UFO? Is it a yacht? In fact, it's a folly on one side and a church steeple on the other

Start planning for a beautiful spring garden

Moist September weather is a good time to set about dividing the herbaceous perennials, while the roots are still active but the tops are dying back. It pays to divide now those plants which flower and leaf early in spring, such as pulmonaria, *Euphorbia griffithii*, brunnera and the early hostas.

Take cuttings of perennials under polythene, pushing them in around the edge of a 6in pot. Pot them on separately in the spring. Most perennials survive winter outdoors, but the strongest, healthiest plants are those raised afresh from cuttings and planted out again in spring.

As the leaves of potted lilies begin to yellow, gradually withhold water. When the stems have dried, cut them off and store the pots, almost dry, in a cool frost-free place. In spring, repot the bulbs in fresh compost.

Bring indoors to a cool greenhouse potted azaleas which have been standing outside in summer. Keep them moist and light, and start to feed with liquid tomato food only when the flower buds start to swell.

Collect and burn the falling leaves of plants with fungal leaf diseases, such as rose or hypericum rust, black spot, willow anthracnose and so on.

When new compost heaps are being made from the dead stems

of herbaceous plants and spent bedding plants, a dusting of lime between layers helps to keep the heap sweet.

Light coverings of leaves on lawns may be removed using a rotary lawnmower with the collection box fitted; this shreds the leaves and speeds up rotting, the nitrogen in the grass clippings helping to break down the soft tissues in the leaves.

Check that summer growth has not tightened tree-ties around

young trunks, and slacken them to allow a little play. Trees which may no longer require a stake are better left until spring to have the stakes removed. The tree tie which is kindest to soft young bark is an old pair of tights, tied in a figure of eight.

There is still just time before the winter to get another dose of weedkiller (glyphosate) into the foliage of recurrent problem weeds, such as ground elder. There is no point spraying foliage which is already yellow, but spraying green foliage will help for next year.

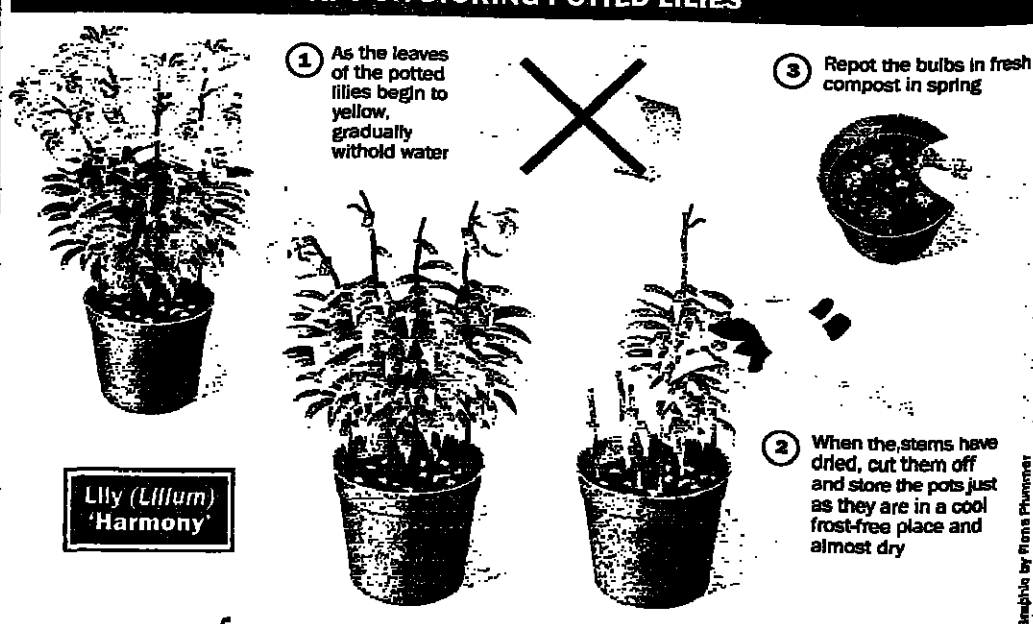
Burn potato haulms infected with blight. Do not put them on the compost heap.

Dead-head late-flowering bedding plants such as dahlias, and argyranthemums.

Order fruit trees and bushes for delivery early next spring.



TIPS ON STORING POTTED LILIES





Left: the well-stocked main garden at Eastgrove Cottage, with its fine and often rare plants, is best seen in late summer.



Right: at Hinton Ampner, the terraces are all given an identity by their planting schemes, whether formal or unrestrained.

■ Eastgrove Cottage, Sankyns Green, near Shravley, Little Witley, Worcestershire (01299 896389)

Between Shravley on the B4196 and Great Witley on the A443, eight miles northwest of Worcester. Open Thurs, Fri, Sat to Oct 18, and Sun Sept 28 and Oct 12, 2-5pm. £2, children free.

This is one of my favourite gardens, and one that you leave with a sense of having seen not just an outstanding garden but one that is also a place resounding with enthusiasm. Because Eastgrove is set deep in the countryside and finding it is challenging, you arrive with heightened expectation. The introduction of the garden around the old barn opposite the cottage is something of an appetiser. In

the main garden the atmosphere of a cottage is never overpowered by the quantity of fine and often rare plants. To one side is an orchard garden that you can immediately imagine in spring, at the far end is a small arboretum. Perennials are the speciality — though not at the expense of shrubs and bulbs — and late summer is one of the best times, with outstanding Michaelmas daisies, dahlias and other seasonal delights. The nursery that Malcolm and Carol Skinner run next to the garden offers many of the plants you will have admired.

■ Hinton Ampner, Bramdean, Hampshire (01627 771305)

Eight miles east of Winchester. Open today and tomorrow, then Tues, Wed, Sat and Sun to end Sept, 1.30-5.30pm (last entry 5pm). £2.50, children £1.40.

The garden, though created during this century, boasts a distinguished classical tradition that stretches back to the Italian Renaissance. Ralph Dutton,

who became Lord Sherborne, lived here for half a century from 1935 and developed the house and garden. The house was rebuilt in Georgian style and the garden incorporated the main existing features. The sense of orderly garden design is apparent as you approach the house and continues with the lily pool garden on the east side. It is along the south side, however, that the garden's forte is revealed; a superb progression of

terraces overlooking the chalk farmland beyond. The terraces are all given an identity by their planting schemes, whether architectural and formal such as an avenue of Irish yews, or more unrestrained in large groups of flowering shrubs. Perhaps the most striking feature is how the garden's impressive collection of statuary and other ornaments are incorporated into the design: one great figure standing silhouetted on the edge of the garden and park provides a dramatic focal point to one of the long vistas across the terraces.

■ Lochalsh Woodland Garden, Balmacara, Kyle, Highland (01599 566325)

Off A87, three miles east of Kyle of Lochalsh. Open daily all year, 9am-sunset. £1, children 50p.

The garden was begun at the end of the last century, the steep site developed as a woodland garden protected by pines, beech and other woodland trees. The rhododendron collection built up in the 1950s is the spring and early summer forte. More recently, the planting and seasonal interest has been extended with bamboos and ferns, and hydrangeas and fuchsias that are flowering now.

GEORGE PLUMPTRE

Seeking out the late summer scents

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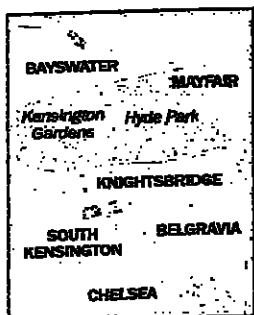
Tomasz Starzewski favours sumptuous, dark fabrics and cannot stand natural light. That has not deterred his wealthy clients from beating a path to the door of his basement flat

A dapper dresser's den

MARKET COMMENT

SOUTH Kensington is the haunt of overseas buyers and young professionals who are attracted by the area's good transport links, shops and restaurants, handsome classically constructed stucco-fronted houses — and an air of vibrancy and community missing from neighbouring districts such as Belgravia, Mayfair and Knightsbridge.

A further attraction is the ready availability of relatively long leases. For example, the freehold for the Henry Smith Charity Estate, which encompasses about 1,400 of South Kensington's most attractive flats and houses, was sold last summer; the new landlord, Wellcome, is offering leaseholders the chance to buy a new 105-year lease (most current leases are down to around 53 years) at 15 per cent of the current property value. On a £300,000 flat this would work out at £45,000. That flat would attract a premium of around 10-15 per cent as a result, pushing its value from £345,000



to perhaps £385,000 according to Matthew Kaye at Chesterfield. Many apartments in Belgravia and Knightsbridge have leases of less than 40 years. Mortgage lenders generally look for a minimum 50 years.

A PRICE of £300,000 represents the lower side of the two-bedroom flat market in South Kensington: it would buy a basement or second-floor flat in a pleasant street but probably without the sought-after communal garden outlook. Comparable first-floor flats will fetch prices approaching £400,000, or more.

Prices have risen dramatically during the year: Peter Rollings of Foxtons reports increases of 20 per cent on the resale of properties sold at this lower end of the market. But the pressure has eased recently, with evidence of asking prices being dropped, as vendors have pushed their luck beyond the bounds of even this active market.

FAITH GLASGOW

Alex O'Connell examines the personal style of a man who dresses the rich and famous

Tomasz Starzewski, society fashion designer and accomplished air kisser, is moving bou-doirs. The man whose client list reads like an index of royal wedding attendees — Sophie Rhys-Jones, Ivana Trump, Victoria Beckham, Shirley Bassey, Stefanie Powers, Annie Lennox and, until recently, Diana, Princess of Wales — rests within hopping distance of Kensington Palace and the boutiques and boulangeries of the Old Brompton Road. This week, his one-bedroom Victorian basement flat — a sort of aristocratic drop-in centre for gown-deprived Lunching Ladies — is going on the market for £295,000.

Starzewski is hard to pigeonhole. His own designs are not very enough for the 11 girls — Normandie Keith recently modelled some of his dresses in *Hello!* and looked like a dour old spinster wrapped up in a curtain — although he probably dresses their mothers. His personal style is that of a podgy, mollycoddled schoolboy: fop-pish hair, tortoiseshell glasses, Thomas Pink shirt and shiny cufflinks. More dapper don than St Martin's alumnus.

His flat is an exhausting mix of conflicting styles, a sort of misfired Portobello chic made up of friends' artwork and ethnic hand-me-downs.

Born in Barnes in southwest London, the son of Polish parents — his father was an architect, his mother a designer — "Totoom" (as the ladies purr) bought his pied-à-terre two and a half years ago. This is Starzewski's first real home. Previous abodes included a poky flat above a fish and chip shop in Fulham and a tiny nook in Old Compton Street (the sort of place where you can buy a vibrating egg, an Elvis phone and a tarte au citron in adjoining shops).

When he first moved to



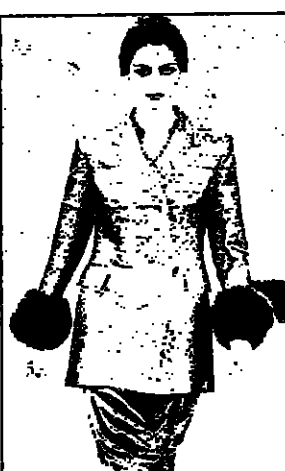
The flat's living room is an exhausting mixture of styles, including ethnic hand-me-downs, illuminated by dim lamps

Kensington, the previous owner had the place looking like a spoilt scotty dog: all tartan walls and ribbons. Starzewski's friend Tessa Kennedy directed the face-lift. The rooms are still very dark; he is a regular Blanche DuBois and cannot abide natural light, something his wrinklier clients appreciate. So there are dim lamps in every corner and sumptuous, deep, dark fabrics.

Even Aladdin might find the drawing room a tad overcrowded. Starzewski is a patron of young British art, and there is a large bullfight scene at the far end of the room painted by Tessa Kennedy's son, Damian Elwes. The bar in the corner — a grim mahogany monstrosity, resembling an altar in a Russian Orthodox church, was inspired by a trip to Russia. An eye searching for visual calm would do best to lie back on the leopardskin chaise longue — "it's a day-bed and a place to read and watch telly" — and look to the whitewashed ceiling.

Starzewski entertains a lot. "I have dinner parties once or

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



A new Starzewski creation gracing the catwalk

twice a week," he says. "That's what this home is for." If he was not a designer he would be a chef. The kitchen — an excavated coal hole — is a shabby, sand-coloured den with a Middle Eastern feel. Pipes run across the perilously low ceiling and it seems likely

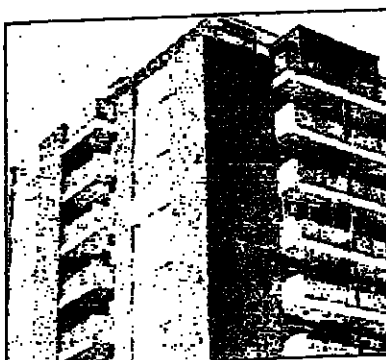
that anyone with any money would scrap it and convert the bathroom into a swankier cloakroom.

Starzewski has spent many years of his life in a state of celibacy, despite bizarre rumours of his engagement to Maya Fick. This has not prevented him devoting a lot of time and energy to making his bedroom comfortable. A large canopied bed is dressed in his parents' wedding bedspread. Pastel lamps sit unceasingly beside an exhausting collection of tassels and drapery. The green felt walls made me want to bring back my Fuzzy Felts and spend the rest of the morning creating an authentic farmyard scene.

Starzewski, who attended the Princess of Wales's funeral, confirms that it is time for a change. "The next place will be completely different. It will be very modern. I am looking for a new house to gut." He is in no rush: "If it sells, it sells, if it doesn't, it doesn't."

● Agent: Chesterfield (0171-581 5234). Paul Daniels's house, featured last week, is for sale through agents John D. Wood (0171-683 4100).

DREAM HOMES OF THE FASHION DESIGNERS



BEN DE LISI, fashion designer, lives in a one-bedroom flat in a 1960s block on the King's Road, central London. He bought the flat four years ago for £106,000 and had the interiors redesigned by the designer Adam Dolle. The flat is now worth about £240,000.



JONATHAN DOCHERTY, designer and partner in Georgina von Erdorf, the accessory design company, lives in a two-bedroom 18th-century lodge just outside Salisbury. The beautifully decorated property is close to the company's workshop, a converted barn.



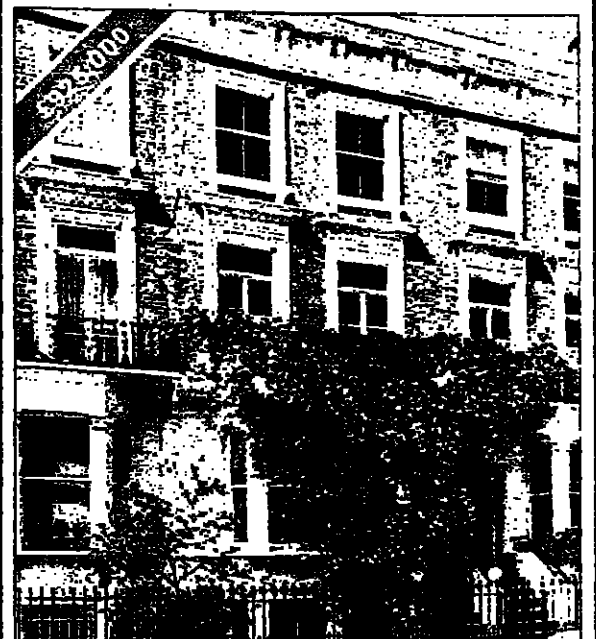
PAUL COSTELLO, Irish fashion designer, lives in a large five-bedroom property with his wife, Anne, and seven children, in Monkstown, Co Dublin. Costello bought the early 19th-century Regency house 12 years ago after being "drawn to its optimistic feel".

HOME SWAP

THE AREA to the west of Chelsea, towards Fulham, with its trendy shops and restaurants, is gaining popularity with young well-heeled media folk looking for a London pad. Property prices in SW10 are 20 per cent cheaper than in central Chelsea, despite gains of 25 per cent this year. A one-bedroom flat in a converted stucco-fronted 18th century house in the popular cherry tree-lined Redcliffe Road, around the corner from the Fulham ABC, where Liz Hurley and Hugh Grant have just bought a £1-million house, will set you back £225,000.

London escapees are finding very little to buy in Gloucestershire. Good houses coming to the market in the £500,000 to £800,000 bracket are being snapped up fast, with some fetching 10 per cent over their guides, says Rupert Sweeting of Knight Frank's Country House Department. Popular areas include Stroud, Stow-on-the-Wold, Cirencester and Tetbury, where the average price for a farmhouse is £500,000 and a country house with a cottage and a few acres £500,000, following price rises of up to 15 per cent in the past year.

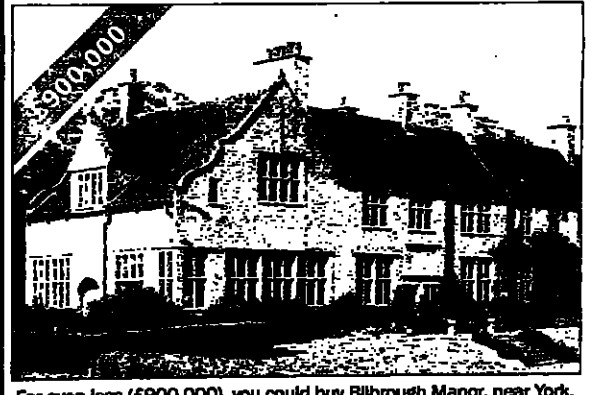
Any good house within commuting distance of Leeds, Harrogate and York sells quickly, with increasingly high prices. The area appeals to relocating lawyers and accountants in Leeds, looking for country homes in the range £400,000 to £600,000 pushing prices up 15 per cent this year.



This handsome four-bedroom Victorian terraced house with a paved rear garden, in Lamont Road, London SW10, has a price tag of £925,000. (Lane Fox, 0171-225 3866).



In Gloucestershire, £925,000 will buy you The Mount House, a fine Grade II* listed 17th century house in 3.25 acres of gardens and paddocks, at Alderley, once owned by the famous botanist Marianne North. It has six bedrooms, a self-contained flat, a two-bedroom converted coach house, stabling, tennis court and a swimming pool. (Knight Frank, 01285 659771).



For even less (£900,000), you could buy Billbrough Manor, near York, a Grade II listed ten-bedroom Edwardian country house in 42 acres of gardens, park and woodland, with views towards the Yorkshire Dales. It has four large-sized reception rooms, a two room flat and a self-contained two bedroom annexe. (Knight Frank, 02904 671 672). CHERYL TAYLOR

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It is possible to use an agent to sell your house and then 'forget' to pay the commission, says Tom Rowland



Reception room as decorated by Yates; note the leopardskin rug

Now we can feel sorry for estate agents

Paula Yates, former wife of Bob Geldof and mother of four exotically named daughters (remember the youngest, little Heavenly Hiraani Tiger Lily?), has pioneered what could be a disturbing new trend in house selling. She has discovered a way of pocketing nearly the entire selling price and keeping the estate agent who negotiated the deal waiting indefinitely for most of his commission.

Try this trick with other bills and before long you can expect a stream of nasty letters threatening legal action. But it is surprising how remarkably understanding that much-maligned breed of estate agents become when faced with a client who does not pay up. It is the modern equivalent of neglected Edwardian tailors who waited for months for a pittance from their clients.

In June last year the former television presenter sold her double-fronted period house in Clapham, south London, for £480,000; a year and three months on she still owes the agent £11,689.54 in unpaid commission and interest payments. The remarkable patience of Battersea

estate agent Ivor Dickinson, managing director of Douglas & Gordon, has been tested to the full.

He says there is little prospect of recovering the money but he is still reluctant to sue.

In most house sales the agent's commission is deducted by the solicitor who does the conveyance, but clients can insist that all the proceeds are passed on, leaving them to settle the agent's bill themselves. Which is what happened in this case. But the bill has not been fully paid.

"There is no point in suing in cases like this because if the client has not got the money we still end up with nothing," said Mr Dickinson.

"She was very happy with the service we gave her, in fact she was delighted. Initially I felt sorry for her, she had broken up with her husband and was being hounded by the tabloids at the time, and we were doing her a favour in not pressing for quick payment."

"But we have waited and waited and it is increasingly annoying seeing pictures of her climbing in and out of smart cars into her luxury Chelsea home and off jet-setting while we are ignored."



Double-fronted house in Clapham, south London, bought by Yates after she had separated from Bob Geldof, her then husband

In June this year a firm of accountants retained by Yates sent a cheque for £6,920 in part-payment of the commission charge which stood at £15,820 before interest claimed for late payment under the agent's contract.

"We are asked by Ms Yates to apologise for the long delay in settling this account," said the letter from London accountants Lubbock Fine, agreeing that the debt should be paid. Money she had been

waiting for had not arrived, explained the letter, but as soon as it did, "the balance of your account will be dealt with."

Since then Mr Dickinson has asked for his money on at least 11 occasions, but says he has been repeatedly stalled. "It is particularly annoying because we were joint agents on the sale and I have already paid Winkworths its 1 per cent cut on the £480,000," he said.

David Levy, senior partner of

Lubbock Fine, said: "I suspect that Mr Dickinson will be paid in the fullness of time—I suspect, but I do not know."

Yates bought the house in Cheltenham Road after separating from Geldof, her then husband. As part of her divorce deal she was allowed to move back into the former marital home in Chelsea with daughters Fifi Trixibelle, Peaches Honey-

blossom and Little Fiddle. Meanwhile Geldof moved around the corner into a small flat owned by Yates's lover, Michael Hutchence, the Australian rock singer whose child she was carrying.

The Clapham house was not easy to sell. Its lurid decoration was not to everybody's taste. Walls, woodwork and all the custom-made cupboards in the kitchen were painted bright red, while the reception room was purple with



On the move: Paula Yates

"We are still waiting; it is annoying seeing pictures of her in her luxury home and off jet-setting while our bill is ignored"

leopardskin rug and cushions and an elaborate wooden overmantle encrusted with brightly coloured shells.

The house has a double reception room, master bedroom suite with bathroom and dressing room attached and four further bedrooms. It was on the market for £550,000 but the offer of £480,000 was accepted after three months.

Yates was not available for comment.



OXFORDSHIRE - Langford Guide Price: £345,000
A Grade II listed stone built house of 17th Century origin in a delightful village setting. 4/6 bedrooms, 2/3 bathrooms, bed 6/dressing room, 4 reception rooms, kitchen, bed 5/music room, bed 3/cloakroom, barn, courtyard & gardens. About 0.12 ha (0.3 acres).
OXFORD OFFICE: 01865 311522



MARKHAM STREET, SW3. Freehold £600,000
A double fronted period house which can be extended considerably, subject to consents, in this most attractive street. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, cellar & rear patio.
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WANDSWORTH COMMON, SW18. Freehold £175,000
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DORSET - West Milton Guide Price: £375,000
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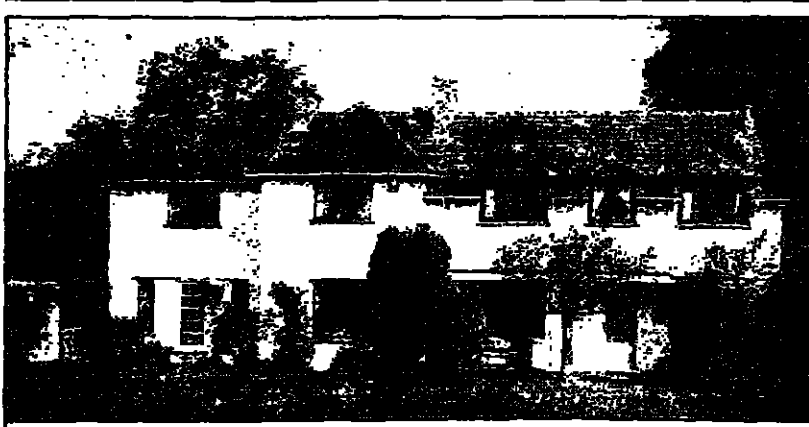
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OXFORD - Ifley Guide Price: £375,000
An attractive house in a quiet no-through road, within easy reach of Central Oxford. 6 bedrooms, bathroom, shower room, 4 reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom, utility room, garage & garden. About 0.12 ha (0.3 acres).
OXFORD OFFICE: 01865 311522



WILTSHIRE - Baydon Guide Price: £240,000
A charming Grade II listed cottage, set high on the Marlborough Downs, with far flung views. 3 bedrooms, boxroom, bathroom, 2 reception rooms, garden room, kitchen, & gardens. About 0.2 ha (0.5 acres).
NEWBURY OFFICE: 01635 523225



SCARSDALE STUDIOS, W8. Freehold £350,000
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Joint Sole Agents: Messrs Russell Simpson 0171 225 0277
KENSINGTON OFFICE: 0171 727 0705



KENT - Beckenham Guide Price: £850,000
A house of distinction with adjoining 3 bedroom cottage in an elevated setting & well placed for communications. 6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 shower rooms, 5 reception rooms, flat, garaging & garden. Joint Sole Agents: Mann & Co 0181 638 7127
HEAD OFFICE: 0171 493 4106

Caritas (Durufle). The Chaplain.

A VET WRITES

Q My six-month-old hamster used to wake at 8pm but since he stayed with my grandparents while we were on holiday it's 11pm before he stirs. Then he's awake for most of the night. The hamsters I see in pet shops are busy and active in the day. How can I make my hamster less nocturnal, so he's awake when I get home from school, without being cruel?

A Syrian (Golden) hamsters are nocturnal — and solitary — animals. The ones in pet shops are less than eight weeks old. Like all young animals they're active and playful at inconvenient times. Before long you will be nearly dark when you get home from school. Then he'll think it's night and time to get up. You could also persuade someone to fit a lighting system for your hamster, that comes on at 2am and goes off at about 8am. Then he'll have 15 hours of light in which to sleep (six electric, nine natural) and be raring to go in early evening.

Q My half-Siamese cat Fang has a patch of greasy matted fur on his back, above the tail. A cat-breeder told me it was "stud tail" but I'm little wiser and Fang is neutered. What is it, and what can I do?

A Stud tail occurs when there's an excessive production of sebum, the natural oil in a cat's coat. It's usually seen in un-neutered males, especially pure bred ones used for breeding. Hence the name, although neuters can be affected, too. It won't harm or distress Fang and is simply a cosmetic problem. Regular washing helps but use a shampoo suitable for cats. They can react to shampoos which are harmless to dogs.

Q Bess, our black Labrador, is a year old. She has a marvellous figure and we want her to stay like this. I read that 50 per cent of dogs are overweight, and many Labradors I see in the park are fat. Can you suggest a "keep-slim" programme?

A In six months' time Bess should weigh 65lb, and six months later should be no heavier.

At that stage 10 per cent less food will keep her svelte. Bring Bess up to enjoy a piece of apple or carrot and believe it's a reward for virtue.

If you take a firm approach you'll be able to write again in ten years to tell me Bess weighs 68lbs — allowing for an acceptable middle age spread.

JAMES ALLCOCK

ADOPT ME



Gentle and loving: Dibbs

DIBBS is a six-year-old black and white Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross that has been with the RSPCA since November last year. She is very affectionate and gentle and would make an excellent pet for anyone without young children or cats.

Contact the Blackberry Farm RSPCA centre at Quainton, nr Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire (01296 655073/4).

You don't have to be barking mad to wear the hair of the dog

Combings from a pet can be fashioned into a reminder of a furry friend, **Claire Horton-Bussey** writes

If you share your life with a black-and-tan cocker, a doberman pinscher or a Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the latest pet-lover's craze from America will leave you cold. If, however, you are the proud owner of a Siberian husky, a Polish owczarek niziny or a golden retriever you are in luck. As well as guarding your home and savaging your postman, your pet could provide you with a supply of scarves, mittens and tea cosies.

Yes, we are talking about an answer to "shedding", the dog-lover's euphemism for the great drifts of canine hair which clog up the vacuum cleaner, adhere tenaciously to your best velvet dress and garnish all the comfortable seats in the house. Now you can recycle all that hair into pullovers, hats and gloves.

Full instructions are provided in a "woof-to-warm" guide, *Knitting with Dog Hair* (Hutchinson, £6.99). Even if your pet's coat tends to be permanently matted with obscure and smelly bits of countryside, there is hope. The book's authors, Kendall Crolius and Anne Black Montgomery, are relentlessly encouraging.

Knitting dog hair is a centuries-old global phenomenon. You can even buy dog-hair sweaters in Estonia where they are believed to alleviate arthritis and rheumatism. If these benefits do not instantly convert you, Crolius and Montgomery remind us about the environmental advantages of not overloading landfills with dog hair, of saving elec-

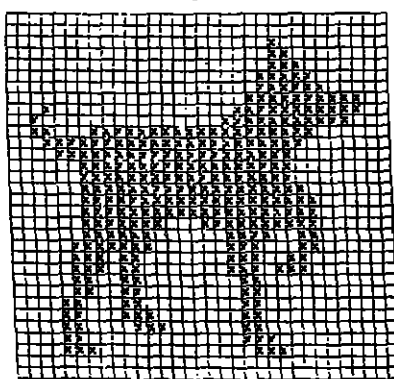
tricity on vacuuming — and of course the whole family can join in because, they say, brushing the dog and spinning the fibres "is a terrific way to spend time together".

Having combed your Norwegian elkhound or Saint Bernard — and some owners may prefer to use a garden rake for this process — you should wash your harvest of fuzz. It is not necessary for a dog-hair jumper to actually smell of dog. As anyone whose dog has ever had a swim in the sea knows, wet-dog smell can empty a building faster than a fire alarm. The book offers useful tips about how not to clog the kitchen sink and then disappears into the intricacies of oiling, carding and blending the fibres, and spinning, plying, skeining and dyeing your yarns. It would probably be easier to get your granny from Shetland to do this bit.

If you have got this far without going barking mad, you can now make things.

One person who knows all about knitting with dog hair is Pam Gardner from Towcester, Northamptonshire, who started spinning her old English sheepdog's hair in the 1970s. Soon people were asking her to knit their own dogs' fur.

There's certainly a market for it — enough to keep Pam busy, although since spinning



Pattern for a pet-hair knit top, and the finished item

the average combing takes about 40 hours, she doesn't need many commissions to keep her fully occupied.

Pam has used the hair from more than 30 breeds of dog. Some breeds have softer hair than others, and it also de-

pends on which part of the body the hair comes from: the tail, for example, is often coarser than other parts.

Pam hasn't yet encountered fleas sent to her, but moths can be a problem. If she comes across an infested package, it's sent back with an apology and an explanation. "I just can't risk keeping it near the other samples," says Pam, who charges £8 to spin a 100 grams.

Carol Allen is also a veteran dog-hair knitter. Her passion started after a long-overdue grooming session on her blue merle Shetland sheepdog, Ash. Her inspiration came when she went to dispose of the huge pile of removed undercoat.

She felt the warmth and the softness and took a moment to really look at the beautiful mountains of fibre.

"There were so many pretty colours ranging from white, through to silver-blue, gun metal and charcoal. I couldn't bring myself to throw it away." So she didn't.

There's a big demand for knitters to make a memento from the fur of dogs that have died. People apparently take comfort in wearing a scarf or sweater made from their pet's coat. To make sure the me-

mento is long-lasting, the fibre must be treated with care.

"It's washed when I've finished spinning it," says Pam, "but after that, I recommend people dry clean garments, unless they are very good at hand-washing. The wool becomes heavy when wet, and simply turning it over in the sink can stretch it — you can end up with a waistcoat down to your knees."

Some groomers have gone one step further, considering knitting with pet hair to be passé. Design-a-mat, one of the more unusual classes in the Eurogroom competition, an event held annually in west London to find the top European groomer, has seen many innovative uses for pets' shorn locks. Previous entries include a life-size model of a groomer, a map of the world where each country was made from the fur of an indigenous breed, even dog hair sculptures.

Sculptures made from the coat of a deceased pet are much sought after by bereaved owners hoping to immortalise Fido — and it's a lot less hassle than taxidermy. As far as many pet owners are concerned, however, a garment made from their pet's coat has the advantage that they can still engage in physical contact with the departed pet. The warmth a scarf or jumper can offer creates more comfort than having a sculpture on a mantelpiece.

As the cover of *Knitting with Dog Hair* says: "Better a sweater from a dog you know and love, than from a sheep you'll never meet."



Wearer-friendly dog-hair creations are becoming a craze

KNITTERS PET DREAMS

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Buck teeth are a sign of bad eating habits

New research is challenging the view that dental problems in tame rabbits are inherited

The picky diet of a pet rabbit and a life hidden away in a shady hutch are proving to be the causes of dental disease, new research has found.

Many of Britain's rabbits are suffering from calcium deficiencies leading to nasty facial abscesses, rotten teeth and other related ailments.

The findings, which overturn the popular view on why so many pet rabbits need drastic dental treatment, have been made by Frances Harcourt-Brown, a vet based in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. The popular view is that pet rabbits suffer either from inherited tooth disease or they do not have enough of the right things to chew. Rabbits need to gnaw away so that their chisel-like front teeth, or incisors, are ground down to allow new growth through.

"If you watch rabbits sitting in a hutch, they often grind their teeth together anyway, even when there is no food in the mouth. So I do not think this is a big issue," she says.

Instead Mrs Harcourt-Brown's research, published in the latest *Journal of Veterinary Postgraduate Clinical Study*, has looked at the levels of calcium in the average pet

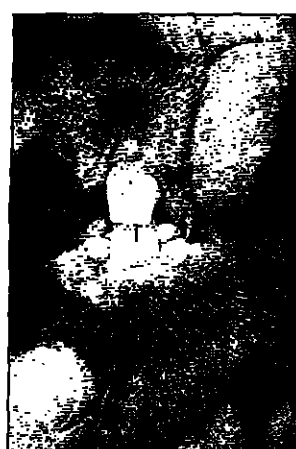
rabbit's diet. A small quantity of calcium is essential for healthy teeth and jaw bones.

Wild rabbits' diet includes grasses, weeds and dandelions, all of which contain some calcium.

Rabbit food from pet shops contains a wide variety of ingredients including cereals, peas, extruded wheat that looks like dog biscuits and pellets rich in calcium.

But Mrs Harcourt-Brown has found evidence that the pets often ignore the pellets and leave them at the bottom of the bowl, selecting instead the peas and cereals which "have virtually no calcium at all", she says.

Worse still, the foods the rabbits are picking out are



A typical unhealthy mouth

often rich in phosphorus, an element which blocks the uptake of calcium.

Life in a shady hutch is aggravating the situation.

Vitamin D is important for absorbing calcium from the diet. Wild rabbits run around in the sunshine all day and naturally make vitamin D

from ultraviolet light, but most pet rabbits are in hutches all day long," says Mrs Harcourt-Brown. The research indicates that a rabbit suffering calcium deficiency will begin to show signs at 18 months.

Apart from decay and abscesses, rabbits' back teeth can develop sharp, needle-like structures that stick in the side of the tongue.

"This is very painful and can stop the rabbit from grooming: it will salivate a lot and stops eating. Because it is unable to groom properly, the pet may also get fly strike."

"These are maggots around the rear end and are very common," says the vet.

She has recently contacted pet food makers to see if they can reformulate feeds to tackle the problem.

Mrs Harcourt-Brown does not blame pet shops. "If they look up in the literature they will identify hereditary things or lack of things to chew. It has not filtered down to them yet."

She said rabbit owners whose pets are suffering from dental disease should try to enrich their diets with greens, like cauliflower, leaves, spinach, grasses and dandelions. It might also be wise, especially with older rabbits addicted to pet shop food, to offer them only the calcium-rich pellets for a day or two.

Hay can also provide a source of vitamin D to help the uptake of calcium, she says.

NICK NUTTALL

TOOTHY FACTS

■ The teeth of rabbits grow throughout their lives, and are kept at the correct length by the upper teeth rubbing against the lower ones. *James Allcock* writes.

■ Growing teeth need calcium, phosphorus and Vitamin D. Without sufficient minerals, rabbits end up with soft teeth that wear too quickly.

At the other extreme, if the teeth don't meet — because one is missing or out of alignment — the tooth goes on growing and can prevent the rabbit's mouth closing.

■ Such a tooth would need to be cut back regularly.

■ For trouble-free teeth, rabbits need sunshine, green food and a quality mineral-supplement powder.

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Fat kids on the block

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Fat kids on the block

Obese children risk ill health and ridicule, writes Madeleine Kingsley

A short, fat 10-year-old was performing a "flying angel" at her school gym display. Up the springboard she clomped, bouncing over the horse into the beecake arms of her PE master, who staggered back with a mock groan. The stout party collapsed in sobs as 60 pupils and their parents tittered.

As that child, I still squirm at the humiliation. I would like to think that children of this low-fat age are more lithe, more wisely fed, their feelings less trampled. But youthful avoirdupois is on the increase. A recent study in Shropshire by the *Health Visitor Journal* has found that obesity in five and six-year-olds has increased significantly over the past ten years. Some 2.5 per cent of children were obese in 1985; in 1995, 4 per cent were obese and 12.1 per cent were identified as "requiring surveillance".

Doctors and dieticians are worried about the effects on our health. The British Heart Foundation has found signs of heart disease in children as young as seven, and doctors have given a warning of high blood pressure and cancer of the colon in later life. And despite role models such as the model Sophie Dahl and the comedian Dawn French, "faties" are still condemned ruthlessly by their peers.

Lifestyle changes are largely to blame for the teletubby young: three out of five children watch more than two hours of television daily and



Above: Joe Bunzel, 11, before his diet, and, left, holding encyclopaedias, weighing almost 14kg, the amount he has lost

Children eat more than £220m worth of snacks on the school run alone

sport has been largely removed from the national curriculum. Children also eat too much, munching more than £220 million worth of sweets and snacks on the school run alone. The British Dietetic

Association points at burger bars and convenience foods, "where food tends to be high in fat, low on fruit and veg, fried, battered or pastured". It is the families on low budgets that suffer most. Their

PLAN CHECKLIST

- Giving toddlers sweets to soothe tears or bruises can create a "comfort eating" habit. Give non-food rewards instead.
- Adding activity should take priority over subtracting food.
- Stick to three meals a day. If the after-

school starvation gap needs filling, offer fruit or fat-free jam sandwiches.

- Overweight children often shovel food in so fast they fail to give the brain time to register they've had enough. Slow them down by making meals more sociable, serving food eaten with a fork.



Above: Joe Bunzel, 11, before his diet, and, left, holding encyclopaedias, weighing almost 14kg, the amount he has lost

prime concern, says a Child Poverty Action report, is buying food without waste. So they stick to what their children like (fish fingers, chips and sausages), saving on perishable fresh fruit and veg.

Britain has yet to resort to "fat camps" where sad young Americans are shut away for collective reduction, but nor do we have a concerted approach to fitness. Jackie Bennett, a state-registered dietician working in a private London practice, says parents are ill-informed and confused about their overweight children.

There is no evidence to suggest that the roly-poly one-year-old will become a fat adult, she says — they shed the surplus when they start to crawl. But if you cannot find clothes to fit, or if your child has difficulty running upstairs, you should seek help from a dietician through your GP.

"I never talk about diets but involve them in what we call Jimmy or Sarah's plan," says Ms Bennett. "Praise and non-food rewards help them to keep to it. Eight-year-olds might get stars, with £1 from

mom for the older ones." Addressing the exercise issue first, Ms Bennett focuses on the possible, "even if it's running round the garden rather than going out to rollerskate." Less rather than none is her friendly food rubric. "We agree to crisps at weekends only, fun-sized chocolate instead of large bars and in mum's cooking, olive oil brushed, not poured, in the pan."

Over the weeks, Ms Bennett looks for the child feeling happier in her own skin. "Maybe she can finally buy what she always longed to wear. Waistbands don't chafe. Feeling slimmer, the child is less likely to bunk off games because he's uncomfortable stripping off in the communal changing room."

One of her successes is Joe Bunzel, 11, from south London. Joe has reduced from 62kg to 48.2kg in nine months. His mother, Biddy, followed Ms Bennett's advice. "She re-educated my cooking so Joe no longer tucks into chicken in cream sauce," she says. "Now it's grilled chicken doused in soy sauce, or baked potatoes with stock cube gravy."

Lucky Joe. In my day the heavyweights' cure was segregated school lunches where spongy apples took the place of treacle pudding. "Is it glands or gorging?" our classmates quizzed. I would have given my last chocolate roll for a more enlightened springboard to slimming.

● The British Dietetic Association, 7th Floor, Elizabeth House, 22 Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1LS (0121-643 5483).

Old friends and New Age pigeons

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

'Look! Flying Opal Fruits.'

And so there were

The plan was, on Sunday, that we should go to visit my long-lost friend Jemima. I am not much in the habit of mislaying friends, especially close ones such as Jemima. In fact I keep a sharp eye on my acquaintances, and spend several evenings a month sitting in bed getting ink all over the sheets and writing screeds to Prague and Madrid and Paris and Norfolk, since what all the people I know seem to have in common is an inability to stay in London, where I can easily get at them.

I suppose the temporary loss of Jemima must be attributed to post-partum vagueness. Certainly she was there before Alexander came along and then, some time after he arrived, there she wasn't. I've never known a trail go so cold. No one at her old address, her former job, even the solicitors we both used, seemed to know where to find her.

We had met in our mid-twenties, at a small and rather eccentric publishing house, where we both worked as secretaries. This publisher had a tendency to employ in lowly clerical positions bookish girls who were wildly over-educated for the duties they were supposed to perform. Working there was rather like the descriptions of purgatory as a place where absolutely nothing happens, and it happens very, very slowly.

We all spent our time there draped listlessly over our typewriters in agonies of boredom, reviving only when it was our turn to update the endlessly fascinating saga of our love lives — most of us were grand romantics with a high turnover of young men who invariably broke our hearts. My friendship with Jemima was forged on the day we discovered, over spaghetti *alle vongole* and one too many glasses of wine at the local Italian cafe, that we had both, at different times in our early youth, been very keen on the same young man.

Having mislaid her — and with her, a part of my past — in this careless fashion bothered me a good deal. But then, one day last month, the phone rang and a familiar drawl said: Hi, it was Jemima, remember her? Shriek shriek, scream, scream, God, you sound exactly the same. Where are you? What are you doing? And so it was decided that we should go and visit her at the stately pile in the Cotswolds which it was currently her job to look after.

Alexander is not keen on visits to my

girlfriends ("too much boring talking"), so I wasn't surprised, the morning we were due to drive up to Jemima's, to find him taking steps to subvert the day's plan — muttering darkly over a piece of paper inscribed with the words Secret Magick Spells.

Nothing with some alarm that he favours the Aleister Crowley spelling of magic. I pointed out that spells are tricky things, and liable to turn unexpectedly nasty. Today, for example, I had just decided that, on the way to see Jemima, we would attend mass at Christ Church Cathedral. Loud moans of dismay ensued. But by the time we arrived in Oxford, these had mysteriously subsided into a dignified

silence. Having sat, speechless and immobile, through 90 minutes of plainchant, my son was then swept into a fervent embrace by the American lady sitting next to us, who said that words could not express her admiration for my child management skills. Feeling distinctly contrite, since these skills are heavily based on the techniques that the Cheka used to find so efficacious, I chivvied Alexander off towards lunch — hoping that somewhere among the acres in Jemima's care we might find something to amuse a small, bored child.

"Look!" said Alexander as we turned into the courtyard. "Flying Opal Fruits." And so there were. Wheeling above the car was a flock of startled pigeons. Not pigeon-coloured pigeons, but acid-trip pigeons in shades of turquoise, apricot, primrose and shocking pink. "Good Lord," I said to Jemima, who was strutting towards us, "don't they object?" "Not at all," said Jemima, airily. "They're used to it. We just pop them in a bath of dye every six months. They soon learn to keep their eyes shut."

What with the flying Opal Fruits, and the multi-coloured carpet of their feathers with which the lawns were covered, and the discovery of a dead hedgehog in the shrubbery — not to mention the fact that Jemima and I found ourselves warmly assuring each other that neither of us had Changed A Bit, the whole visit was an unqualified success.

I woke the next morning to the sound of muttered spells from Alexander's room. I didn't ask, but I suspect he was trying to do something about the drab and spavined pigeons that are all our own estate can boast.

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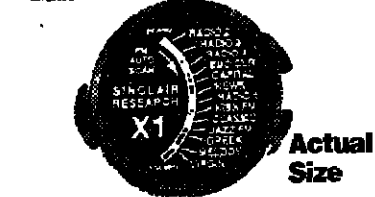


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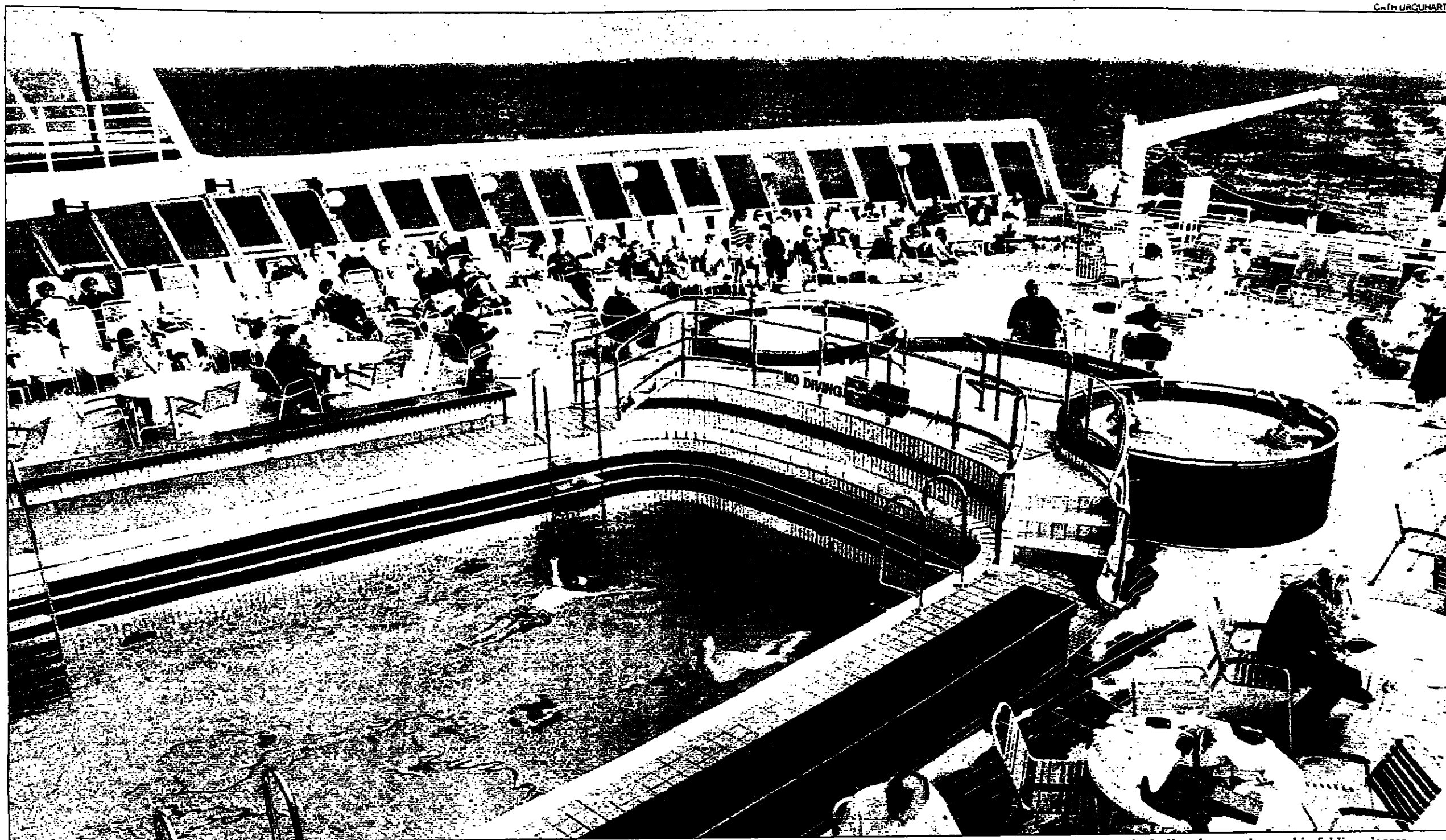
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Focus · 23



All at sea with an old queen



Passengers on the QE2 agree that the enforced leisure of six days at sea is one of the ship's attractions. But there is plenty to do once you tire of the pool and the deckchairs — including the popular napkin-folding classes

With hindsight, it was a sign of things to come. As I fished for my passport and boarding card in the QE2's departure lounge at Southampton, I noticed a violently patterned brown and orange carpet covering one wall. Not for 25 years had such interior décor been considered tasteful. The kiosk nearby was dispensing tea and coffee but not headache tablets, so I hurried on board.

There are two advantages in sailing from Southampton to New York, rather than the other way around. The first is that on five of the six nights at sea, you have an extra hour in bed. The second is that you do not mind if your safety briefing, just before departure, overruns and you are not up on deck when the ship moves off. I would have been cross had I missed seeing the New York skyline — indeed, gliding silently past the Statue of Liberty at 6.30 on the last morning was one of the highlights of the trip — but on departure we were waving goodbye to Southampton docks and an oil refinery.

So once up on deck, I was happy to turn my back on England and concentrate fully on my fellow passengers. And how wonderful to discover that I was to spend the next six days with the cast of an Arthur Hailey novel. There was the Diana Ross lookalike sporting leopard print leggings and big hair; there were the Gentlemen Hosts, in white slacks and navy blazers, already twirling surprised-looking partners to the jazz band playing on deck; there were the handsome stewards; and everywhere I looked there were gold handbags, white linen trousers, Hermès scarves, the odd flat cap, a kilt — which was distinctly daring, given the stiff breeze. And there was Arthur Hailey — not in person, but on a poster advertising his appearance as guest speaker on another crossing.

What the QE2 does, she does supremely well, whether it's crossing the Atlantic smoothly, catering for 1,500 permanently hungry guests, or, indeed, recreating the Seventies on the high seas. The publicity given to the ship's disastrous 1994 refit — when she set sail for New York with carpenters and plumbers still battling with exploding lavatories and other horrors — overlooked what was happening to the style of the ship.

For it seems that Cunard, the QE2's owner, had masterfully, albeit unintentionally, anticipated the Seventies revival of the mid-Nineties, in which flares, wedge heels, frosted eyeshadow and lava lamps made their camp comeback across Britain. I might not have found a lava lamp in my cabin, but if you have ever wondered what happened to disco glitter balls, mauve carpets with green swirly patterns, and baked Alaska once the Seventies ended, you need look no further. They're all here.

There are certainly nods towards the Nineties: the cool ambience and stylish lighting of the Crystal Bar recall fashionable London watering holes such as the Atlantic or Mezz; at the other end of the scale, there are karaoke nights in the Golden Lion pub, to the disgust of the traditionalists. But despite this, the QE2 has, in a rather endearing fashion, taken

Thirty years ago

today, the Queen

launched the QE2.

Cath Urquhart,

Times travel editor,

joined last week's

transatlantic crossing

to see if the world's

most famous liner is

showing her age

a sniffy look at the more recent fashions — Eighties minimalism, the clean lines of Nineties design, nouvelle cuisine and the rest — and decided to give them a miss, and concentrate on what she knows best. Which is getting us across the Atlantic, whatever the weather.

"The QE2 is the last of the great liners, not a cruise ship," said First Officer Hamish Elliott, up on the bridge. "Other ships might have been built for holiday-makers, but the QE2 was built as a means of crossing the Atlantic." Today the QE2 offers short cruises and an annual three-month, round-the-world trip, but her core service is the transatlantic crossing. "We take quite a few passengers who are scared of flying, or who cannot fly for medical reasons, as well as holidaymak-

ers," said Hamish. I was lucky to be on the bridge, for passengers are not allowed to visit it. However they need only watch early episodes of *Star Trek* to get a feel for the large-framed, distinctly Seventies radar screens and other equipment surrounding us. I peered at the waves, 90ft below us, and tried not to feel queasy. Hurricane Erica had been causing chaos around the Caribbean, and although we had missed it by 400 miles, it had created a 15ft swell. A queue had formed at the ship's hospital, where an unsympathetic nurse was administering anti-seasickness jabs and muttering that we hadn't seen anything yet; spare sick bags had thoughtfully been stuck behind railings and pictures all over the ship.

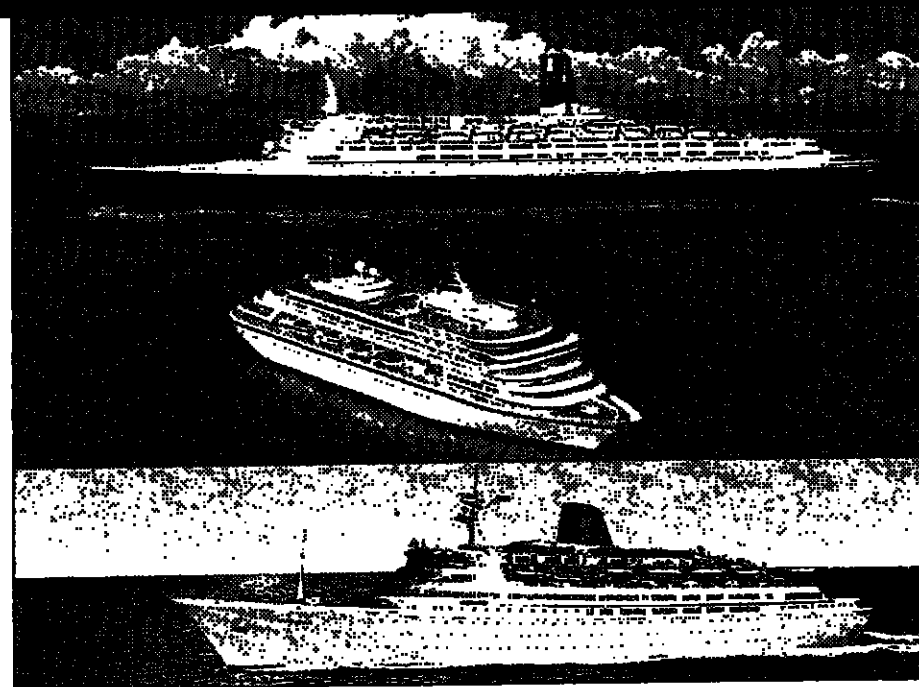
In a vain attempt to make me feel better, Hamish said that regular passengers often ask him if he remembers the Big Storm. "I try to remember which they are talking about, there have been so many," he grinned. In 1995, it was the Big Wave. Hurricane Louis sent a 100ft wave crashing over the ship and buckling one of the decks. In 1993 it was the Big Roll — the ship suddenly hit a huge swell and rolled 20 degrees each way, sending passengers and furniture flying.

Fortunately, the swell soon died away and for most of the crossing, the Atlantic was like a pond, and we enjoyed sunshine, strong breezes and little rain. The view, endless sea in every direction, might sound dull but it was strangely mesmerising: in one panorama the water could change from grey to black to blue to green to silver, sometimes broken by bright yellow seaweed. On the last day, we saw a school of dolphins, and someone reported seeing a whale. Staring at such a huge, empty expanse of water felt spooky: this is supposedly a busy shipping lane, but I saw no other ships.

Not that I spent long looking — there was far too much to do. One of the joys of the QE2 is that room service is free (although everything you must pay for, such as drinks, is now priced in dollars — sterling has become unusable on Britain's most famous liner). So I would start the day with breakfast in my cabin. In 1994 the cabins were updated and now the dark wooden panelling, portholes, and wonderful Art Deco-style bathroom mirrors (and yes, a mauve carpet in the bedroom) are complemented by decent showers and good plumbing.

Then I was off to the health spa for a massage or session in the thalassotherapy pool. Other passengers agreed that the enforced leisure of six days at sea was one of the best reasons for taking the QE2. Janet Neal, 36, from Seattle, said: "We've been going to the spa and the gym, and shopping, and going to the movies" — the QE2 has its own cinema. Her only complaint was that she and her husband Bob, 45, would have liked to meet more people their own age, for most passengers were near or above retirement age.

Beyond the spa, there was a frenzy of activities on offer: dance classes, deck games, computer lessons, gym sessions, readings by guest authors Bill Bryson and Dick Francis. I managed to avoid the 15 couples renewing their wedding vows in



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QE2 FACT FILE

■ Cath Urquhart travelled with Cunard (0800 000500) from Southampton to New York.

Transatlantic crossings depart from Southampton on October 1, November 7 and December 15, with prices between £1,195 and £5,500 per person, based on two sharing a cabin, depending on the grade of cabin and departure date. New year sailings start on April 15, with prices from £1,400 to £6,320 per person.

■ The New Yorker package, including the six-night crossing, three nights at the New York Helmsley Hotel (room-only) and return flight, costs between £1,575 and £5,740 per person this year, and £1,690 and £6,800 per person next year. The price depends on the grade of cabin, is based on two sharing, and includes taxes, transfers, all meals on board (but not drinks) and domestic flights or rail travel to and from Southampton.

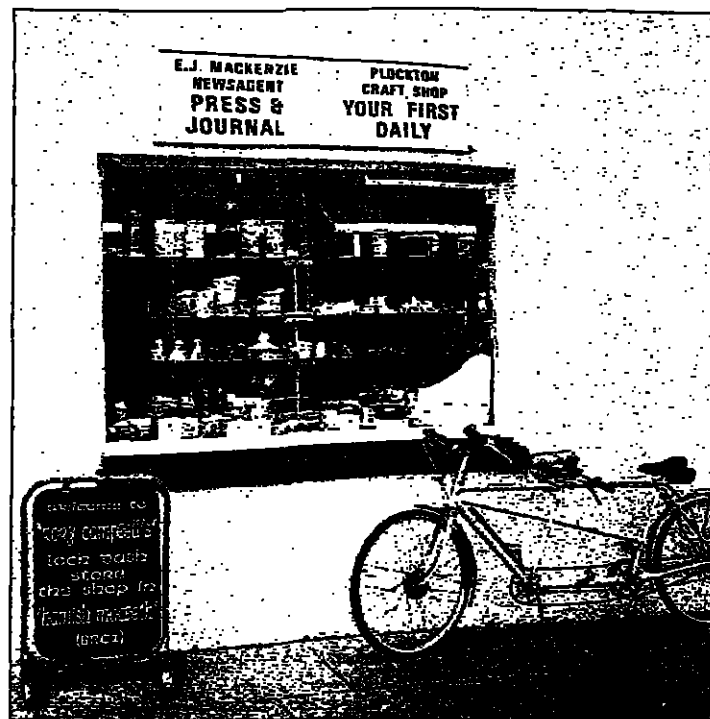
■ Cruise style: Formal wear (black tie for men, cocktail dresses or similar for women) is expected on three evenings, and the other three are pretty smart too, although you can eat any meal in the Lido without dressing up. ■ Reading: Before you go: *Ocean Liners Past and Present: Queen Elizabeth 2* by Gary Buchanan (Past and Present Publishing, £14.99). On board: anything with raised gold lettering on the cover.

Continued on Page 20

CUNARD MOUNTBATTEN HOUSE GROSVENOR SQUARE SOUTHAMPTON SO15 2BF

ATOL 294

Scotland: The Highlands may be wet and windy, but they're full of charm – and charming people – says Sally Baker



Plockton is the village of Lochdubh in Hamish Macbeth

Looking for bright Skye – anorak at the ready

We peered desperately through the rain pattering on the windows of the minibus. There was nothing for it but to take our guide's word for the natural beauty that lay beyond the glass, get the driver to turn up the heating and the volume on his *Greatest Tartan Hits* cassette, and take inner warmth from the prospect of a hot bath, a wee dram, and dinner. On second thoughts, make that a double dram.

If you travel to the Highlands in autumn, you take your meteorological chances. We had five days of truly appalling weather – and

yet the tantalisingly brief glimpses of copper-hued hillsides, lowering purple crags, glens glowing gold in the pale sun, and foaming white water crashing down the rocky slopes above the road were more than enough inducement for us to decide to take our chances again this October.

Fans of *Hamish Macbeth* will need no further encouragement to visit the west coast village of Plockton than the knowledge that it is the real-life Lochdubh of the television series. The palm trees that flourish along the lochside here were not so much swaying in the breeze as bending double in the

gale; and yet the place exerted its charm, so much so that when Callum the boatman took us out on the loch and said we would have to sing to draw the seals, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to break into *The Skye Boat Song*. And it worked: up bobbed a trio of sleek grey heads around the boat.

Skye itself is a short drive from Plockton, but visitors can no longer take the boat – now all must take the infamous new bridge and pay the infamous toll. But if the rain obscured the landscape, it also helped obscure the proliferation of tourist-trap shops and coach parks that mar the approach to this most

romantic of isles. The rain stopped, the sun came out, and our first real sight of Skye was of the thatched "black houses" of the hilltop museum at Kilmuir, and behind them the tall Celtic cross that marks Flora Macdonald's grave.

There is no escape from Flora and her Bonnie Prince on Skye; yet only the most churlish visitor can fail to thrill to the tale, however often heard. Indeed, at the stunningly-sited Flodigarry Hotel at Staffin I stayed in the cottage, now beautifully converted, which became home to Flora and her

husband after the events of 1746, and where five of her seven children were born. Her free spirit was certainly present that night at the ceilidh in the bar, where we stripped the willow, were wildly gay Gordons, clapped, tapped, wheeled and spun like true tourists. But the locals were too busy doing it themselves, or perhaps just too nice, to laugh much.

It was time to rub shoulders with Skye's aristocracy. At the magnificent Dunvegan Castle, home of the chiefs of the clan MacLeod for 700 years, the present MacLeod of MacLeod welcomed us to his Guy Fawkes' bonfire, complete with

Viking boat burning. Then it was south to stay with the Macdonalds of Macdonald at Kinloch Lodge, where Lady Macdonald pours a terrific gin and tonic and serves a superb dinner – but then, she is an award-winning cookery writer.

And finally, back to Inverness by the most splendid route of all – a gentle cruise the length of Loch Ness in a majestic converted 1930s barge, glass of wine in one hand, binoculars in the other, all ready for a little monster-spotting. The clouds lifted, the sun shone, a perfect rainbow arched over the loch, and – no, we didn't see Nessie. Next time, though.

FACT FILE

■ Getting there: Sally Baker travelled with the Scottish Tourist Board (0131-332 2433).

■ Where to stay: The Tornish Hotel in Glen Affric, Strathglass, Inverness-Shire (01456 415399), a good base for hikers; from £20. The Haven Hotel, Plockton, Ross-Shire (01599 544223); from £36. Flodigarry Country House Hotel, Staffin, Isle of Skye (01470 552203); from £46. Kinloch Lodge Hotel, Sleat, Isle of Skye (01471 833214); from £50. All prices are per person for B&B.

■ What to do: Whitewave Activities, No 19 Linico, Kilmuir, Isle of Skye (01470 542414) organises canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, guided walks, archery and biking. Leisure Marine (01599 544306): seal-viewing boat trips run by Callum Mackenzie in Plockton. Skye Riding Centre at Borve, near Portree, Isle of Skye (01470 532233) organises pony trekking through the Trotternish Hills. The Skye Museum of Island Life, Kilmuir, (01470 552206).

■ Loch Ness cruise: Robin Black, Loch Ness and Great Glen Cruise Company, Muirtown Top Lock, Caledonian Canal, Canal Road, Inverness IV3 6NF (01463 711913). A three-night cruise in October costs from £300.

■ Shopping: There is no shortage of kilt-and-cashmere outlets, but for old-fashioned charm and delightful service try the family-run Campbell & Co at the Highland Tweed House in Beaulieu (01463 782239), on the A531 west of Inverness.

■ Further information: The Scottish Tourist Board's Autumn Gold brochure (0345 515111) contains details of special discounts on travel and accommodation available in September, October and November.

■ Tips: Take a good pair of walking boots, a long-sleeved sweater (it can get chilly, especially on boat trips) and binoculars (for bird spotting).

Continued from page 19 the Grand Lounge, but was irresistibly drawn to the napkin-folding class hosted by the ship's social director, Elaine Mackay.

"Your first attempt was so bad that we are going to have to do this one more time," she chastised our class of 40, mostly women, although a few men were gamely tussling with the pink linen napkins, too. I felt pretty pleased with what I thought was my rather neat *fleur de lys*, but Elaine

'The origins of the Baked Alaska Parade were unclear'

had seen better. "If you want to make these for a Christmas party, I suggest you start now," she quipped.

I always tried to catch afternoon tea in the Queen's Room where white-gloved waiters hand round silver salvers of cucumber or salmon sandwiches, fresh scones, and pour a dozen types of tea; a harpist plays quietly in a

corner, and the chairs are turned towards the picture windows for us to watch the waves. Saying no to seconds was hard, but I knew what was to come. Dinner.

At any meal, passengers may order as many helpings or courses as they wish, but after ploughing through the hors d'oeuvre, soup, fish, sorbet, meat and dessert

courses at dinner, there were rarely calls for more. The food was good – a lobster thermidor was particularly memorable, the salads remained crisp even after six days at sea, and the puddings were wicked. But the logistics of serving hundreds of people at once sometimes resulted in long delays. However, I was pleased to find some menus inspired by the same era as those swirly carpets. It must be 20 years since I had french onion soup, coq au vin and crêpe Suzette in one sitting.

We were assigned to the Caronia, one of five formal dining rooms, which were recently reconfigured so everyone can dine at once, instead of in two sittings. This system

does not always work well. Irene Pickworth, from Manchester, on her third QE2 trip, said: "My friend Jane and I asked to eat at a large table so we could get to know people. But we are the only ones who choose to eat at 7pm, so we are sitting alone on a huge table. We feel a bit isolated."

She will be pleased to discover that from next April, the QE2 will reintroduce two sittings. This is because heavy demand for the ship has led Cunard to bring recently mothballed lower-deck cabins back into service, so passenger numbers will rise from 1,500 to their earlier level of 1,750. We managed to take a table in the Britannia Grill one evening, one of the three

smaller restaurants for passengers in the more expensive cabins. The food was better, but the real pleasure was in the less hurried service.

By the last night of the voyage, I felt I had the measure of the ship. Chatting up Hamish on the bridge had paid dividends: he invited me to the officers' party, held in their private bar just below the bridge. This was the party of the week, in the best venue on the ship – at 8pm last Monday it offered a fabulous view of the sunset over Nantucket. At the party we saw the faces that had become familiar during the journey – the guitarist from Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders, the Sixties band that had per-

formed on Saturday night; Bill Bryson, finally released from hours of book-signing; the Channel 5 film crew that spent all week popping up when you were feeling most sea-sick and least photogenic. The crossing had been just long enough to make friends and not so long that you got fed up with them. But I had been unable to solve one mystery. One night

we experienced a shipboard ritual whose origins were unclear: the Baked Alaska Parade. At 8.45pm, our waiters burst in from the kitchen, each bearing a Baked Alaska and a sparkler. The lights were dimmed, we cheered and clapped, the sparklers fizzled out. We ate the Baked Alaskas, none the wiser as to the significance of the event. But perhaps, in a world of psychedelic carpets, napkin-folding classes and big hair, it needed no explanation.

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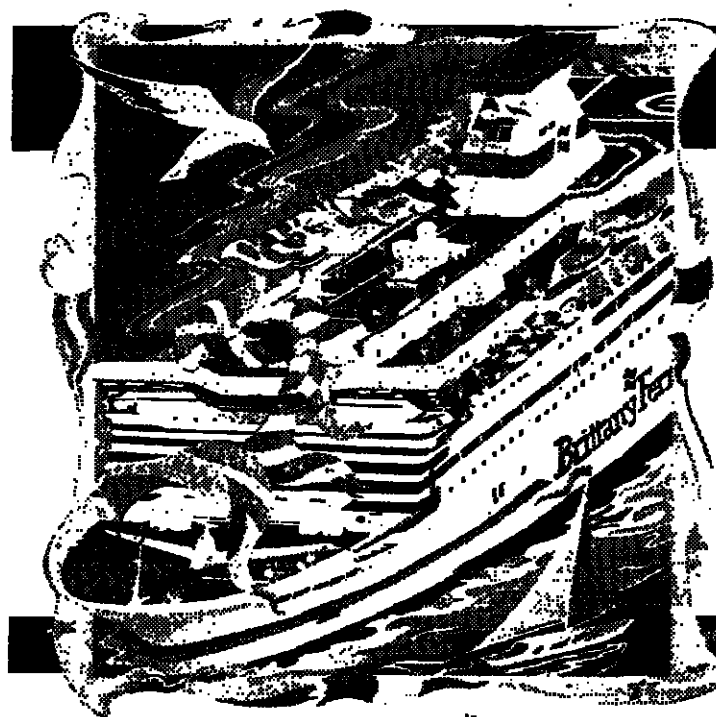
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Alasdair Riley lets the morning train take the strain from Inverness through 'God's own country' to Kyle of Lochalsh

Window seat on a Scottish wonderland

Alasdair Riley, chief of Inverness, the capital of the Highlands, recently identified a local form of Stendhal's Syndrome. This is normally associated with fainting fits suffered by art lovers overcome by beauty encountered in Florentine art galleries. The Scottish version of this problem is the car crashes caused by foreign drivers temporarily stunned by panoramas of lochs, mountains and glens.

The answer, for motorists driven to distraction by the splendour of the Scottish Highlands, is obvious. Let the train take the strain: preferably along ScotRail's 82-mile line from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh, a route which many consider Britain's bonniest.

Some go as far as to say that God did not rest on the seventh day; he merely relaxed by playing at trains. He took a stretch of land bordered by the chilly North Sea on Scotland's east coast and the warm currents of the Gulf Stream on the west. He placed a busy town — Inverness — on one side and a village on the other, complete with a pier and boats plying the waters to a necklace of islands nearby.

He magicked rolling fields, majestic mountains, deep glens, chattering rivers and sparkling lochs. He filled forests with deer, rivers with trout and salmon, and the skies with eagles and buzzards. Then He built a mean-dering single-track railway line between both coasts, hugging lakes and penetrating woodland, with bridges, level-crossings, signal boxes and the rest.

"It's God's own country here," John Fraser said, as the 10.45am Super Sprinter pulled out of Inverness. I had first spotted him and his wife in the lounge car of the Caledonian sleeper out of London the night before, consulting an Ordnance Survey map; then breakfasting on innish had-dock filets with poached egg on top at the Station Hotel, Inverness. We were on nodding terms by the time we took our seats on the iron road to Kyle. The Frasers had moved long since to the Home Counties, but made an annual pilgrimage to the land of their forebears. It always includes a journey to Kyle of Lochalsh, their old staging post for past summer holidays on Skye.

We rumbled over the Ness viaduct, which replaced the bridge washed away by floods eight years ago. There was a

castle or ruin every few miles as we sped along the southern shore of the Beaulieu Firth, then headed north towards Dingwall, where the track divides, one branch north to Wick and Thurso and ours to the west and the Hebrides.

"We haven't stopped off at this station for a few years," Mr Fraser said, "but there certainly used to be a plaque saying that 134,846 Servicemen had a cup of tea here during the First World War. And there are the remains of a castle where Macbeth's father is said to have been born."

A mile or two further on, Strathpeffer, a fashionable 19th-century spa, lay in the valley below, bypassed by the railway because local landowners refused to let it be built on their domain.

Once again, my unofficial guide came into his own. "This meant laying the track up a steep incline, and there are many of them on this line. More than once a coupling broke, and back went a couple of carriages, coming to a halt several miles away."

By now we were climbing through dense forest towards the 458ft summit of Raven Rock, countryside where the clans Mackenzie and Macdonald feuded. Hospitality ended briefly when a marriage was arranged between the son of a Mackenzie chief and a Macdonald daughter. She turned out to have one eye, and was sent packing back to her family on a one-eyed horse, escorted by a one-eyed servant and a one-eyed dog. Hostilities resumed.

We picked up speed descending towards the Blackwater, a dark tree-covered stream, and along the southern shore of Loch Garve. To our right loomed Ben Wyvis, one of Scotland's 277 Munros, mountains over 3,000ft. The view from the summit

stretches over seven counties, from the North Sea to the Atlantic. Mr Fraser uncased his binoculars, looking for deer or buzzard, and hoping for an eagle.

Achnasheneen station, where an old hotel once had a door opening directly on to the platform, prompted another tale. Queen Victoria arrived there by coach, asking for fresh horses to continue her journey. The landlord refused because it was the sabbath, so she was sent to bed with a plate of cold beef.

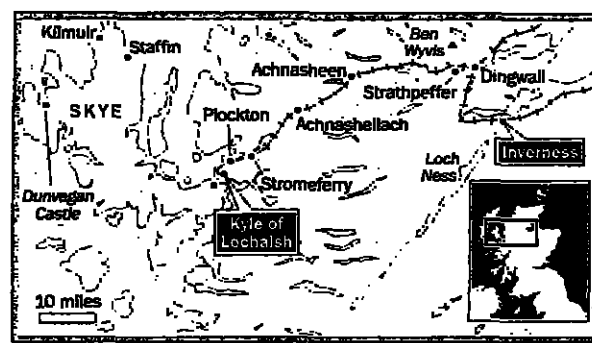
Mountains closed in again as we rose to Lùibh summit, at 646ft the highest point of the



When the railway line reached Kyle of Lochalsh, above, in 1897, celebrations were so lively that the pipers could neither blow, stand up, nor play the same tune by the end

The Queen was sent to bed with a plate of cold beef

MAKING CONNECTIONS



Getting there: Alasdair Riley travelled with ScotRail (0345 550033). The Caledonian sleeper for Inverness departs London Euston at 9.30pm weekdays and 9.10pm Sundays (no Saturday service). A first-class return with cabin is £149.00; an Apex second-class return costs £89 in a two-berth cabin. An Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh

saver return costs £23.30. Where to stay: Station Hotel, Inverness (01463 231926); from £45 per person per night B&B. Lochalsh Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh (01599 534203); from £35 per person per night B&B. Reading: *The Skye Railway* by John Thomas. £5.95 paperback, £12.95 hardback; from House of Lochar (01951 200232).

Peaks rearing above, with pinks and greys of gneiss topped with quartzite, are some of the oldest rocks in the world and challenging beacons for climbers.

We could smell the tangle of the isles, the seaweed iodine and salty whiff of the sea. Loch Carron cutting into the mainland as the hills became gentler and countryside more welcoming.

Next stop, Attadale, where Vikings fought ferocious sport-

ing duels, then, after the first view of the Cuillin mountains 30 miles away on Skye, Stromeferry. It was the Dingwall and Skye Railway Company's original railhead and pier for the Hebrides and lucrative fish business, completed in 1870.

Money ran out. It was not until 1897, after blasting out 30 rock cuttings and building as many bridges, that the line extended the final 15 miles.

The great moment came on November 2, when the first passenger train, Skye Bogie No 70, steamed into Kyle of Lochalsh. The first boats from the railhead pier to Portree in Skye and Stornoway in Lewis left to the sound of cheers, hooting sirens and fireworks. The Grand Railway Ball was held in the evening, an occasion which competed with the gala dinner at Stromeferry 27 years earlier. It was reported then that the pipers, fuelled by whisky, claret and port, "could

neither blow, stand up nor all play the same tune" by the end of the evening.

We were in a happy mood ourselves as we swept along the coastline bordered by rhododendron groves and ancient firs. The view across blue waters to the village of Plockton, setting for the television drama series *Hamish Macbeth*, lifted the heart. Sheltered by low green hills, with the pink peaks of Appletree behind, it is a

haven for holidaymakers and the yachting crowd.

We rattled through crofting fields and Portnacloiche cutting, hewed 80ft into the hillside. It might have been cheaper to tunnel, but the ballast was needed as a foundation for the line.

Occasionally we could glimpse a necklace of islands with names such as Raasay, Scalpay, Longay and Pabay in the Inner Sound.

On time, two-and-a-half hours after leaving Inverness, we pulled into Kyle station, a single-storey building stretching to the pierhead in the shadow of the mountains of Skye.

I took the shuttle bus over the controversial new bridge for a brief visit to the village of Kyleakin. When I returned for the journey back to Inverness, my new friends, the Frasers, were sitting at their favourite spot in the gardens of Lochalsh Hotel, gazing contentedly over the sea to Skye.

They poured a local peaty malt. We raised our glasses and I, too, vowed to become a pilgrim on God's own railway.



The view from Ben Wyvis stretches over seven counties, from the North Sea to the Atlantic

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 28

CHEAPER

(c) One who bids a price: a bidder or purchaser. From the Old English *ceapian*, *cheap* to barter, buy and sell. "He had required yf ye price of ye ground whereof he was a cheaper [temptor] should once be shewed him, and ye seller had so done."

CAVENDISH

(c) Tobacco softened and pressed into solid cakes. "Cavendish is a species of tobacco reckoned by the Excise under the general denomination of

Roll. I suppose the name is taken from the name of the maker in America. I know of no other reason for the name."

CHITTY

(c) Lean and pinched. Puny, childish, baby-like. Perhaps from the French *chicface* with a thin or pinched face.

CORRUMP

(b) To bring to naught, destroy, mar, spoil, render useless. Also to decompose, cause to rot. To infect or taint with corruption. From the Old French *corrompre*, *corrompre*.

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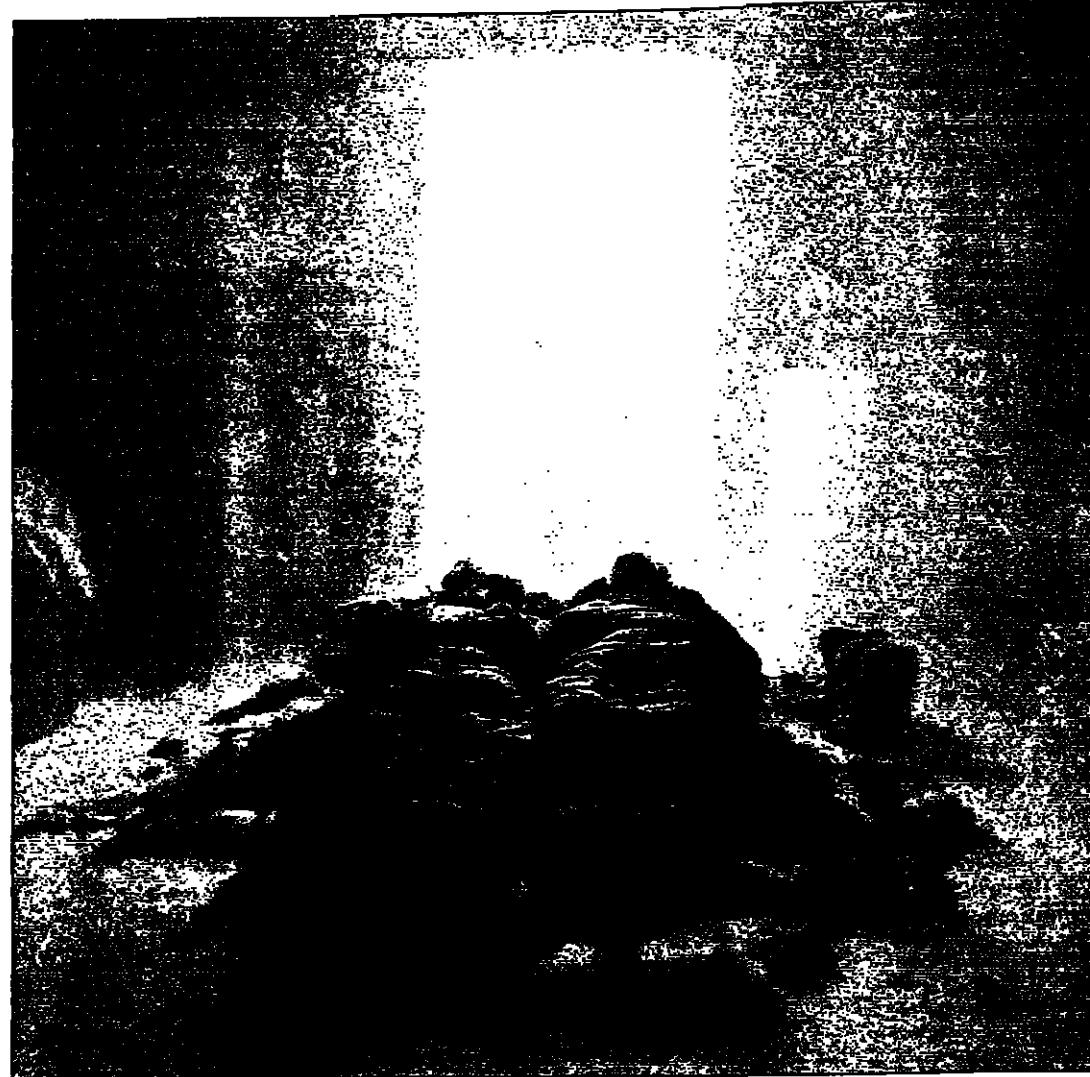
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The hotel bar is made of ice, as are the tables, chairs, glasses, the sculptures and the chandelier. Come spring, though, it all melts away



The temperature in the bedrooms is minus 35C. Guests are advised to get into their sleeping bags quickly

A large Scotch please barman – and hold the ice

In Sweden, Alan Brownjohn finds a hotel where guests look forward to a frosty reception

Heading away from the sun in January, for a break in a remote Arctic village, may suggest contrariness. But the idea of journeying to northern winter wastes had long tempted me, and Jukkasjärvi in Swedish Lapland, north of the Arctic Circle, seemed to offer something uniquely fascinating in the shape – the igloo shape – of its extraordinary Ice Hotel.

Arriving in the transfer minibus from Kiruna airport, I did a double-take, realising that the hotel sign at the entrance is not cut glass, or crystal, but carved and lettered ice. Like the hotel itself, it is made each autumn and melts in May. Most visitors take the wimps' option by spending a night or two acclimatising in a chalet before braving a night in the Ice Hotel.

For a moment I feared rough, spartan conditions in the chalet accommodation. But each of the 30 wooden cabins offers tasteful decor and ample warmth in two-bunk bedrooms, lounge, kitchenette and bathroom.

You can begin your stay by unpacking self-catering supplies bought at the mini-market, and promising yourself an Ice Hotel night when

you feel ready for it. Stepping outside again requires the clothes you should have borrowed free from reception: thick boots, overalls, gloves and a dogskin hat.

On an exploratory walk you notice snow-scooters and skis parked outside cabin doors. Then you might see the headlights of a squad of snowmobiles approaching over a wide plain – Jukkasjärvi's frozen river, the Tornea. Nearby stand high poles joined by wires and ropes for rigorous climbing exercise in the stiff Arctic breezes.

With every winter daylight hour, and there are about five in January, this haunting landscape of northern desolation changes shape and colour. You see slow dawns of luminous mist, noons of driving snow, radiantly clear sunsets. At night the Northern Lights may be visible, glowing streaks and smears and blobs of green and purple in the sky; though you must stand where artificial lighting is blocked

out to see them properly. But to the Ice Hotel. In its main hall, the immense columns supporting the snow ceiling are made of transparent river ice, the water being clearer than lake water. And yes, those tables, chairs and

sculptures are all ice, as is the bar, where drinks come in chunky ice glasses. "Not whisky on the rocks," quips the barman. "In the rocks." I soon adjusted to the hotel's "indoor" temperature of minus 7C. The main hall, which

includes the horseshoe bar, is frostily illuminated by carefully-placed lamps and candles; above hangs an astonishing ice chandelier, intricately wired by fibre-optics. The enchanted atmosphere in this Snow Queen's palace is the achievement of artists Arne Bergh and Ake Larsson who made pillars, furniture, bar, glasses – and the ice sculptures.

They labour here from November to March working on additional sculptures. The tables, glasses and other ornaments last through the season. In the spring their artefacts drip and fade away. But Arne maintains that the sculptures are not wasted: they are "drafts" for pieces later created permanently in wood or stone.

The Ice Hotel also has a cinema, a chapel where couples can be married, and around 20 bedrooms. If parties are booked in, you should claim your accommodation quickly. On my first evening I wasn't sure I had the courage. Weakly perhaps, I decided I would leave the availability of a room to chance and take the option that night of a conventional cabin, perhaps seeing how I felt after a day at the Kiruna Snow Festival.

This is a four-day event at the end of January. The day I went, the weather smiled on

crowds attending dog-sledge and reindeer-sledge races on a hilly town centre circuit. The air vibrated to the music of a Samish (the term used to be "Lapp") band performing during snow sports displays. I asked people watching a rescue dog circling a large mound of snow what they hoped to find. I received puzzled looks.

Suddenly the dog located Mrs Britta-Marie Sundquist under the snow. She allowed herself to be buried as an avalanche "victim", warmly clothed but with no visible means of breathing, until a dog found her.

And when one dog found her, and its trainer uncovered her frozen face, she was buried again for half an hour so that five more dogs could show off their skills.

In Railway Park in Kiruna, 16 two-person teams from six



countries had worked day and night through the festival to make competition sculptures, abstract or figurative, out of huge snow blocks.

Surely, if sculptors of all ages toiled out-of-doors in Arctic conditions, I could manage just one night in the hotel?

Back in Jukkasjärvi, I dined in the award-winning restaurant next to the Ice Hotel. Samish dishes are served here with considerable flourish: mushroom and ptarmigan soup, Arctic char, reindeer steaks with cloudberry sauce.

Conversation with English and Swedish friends turned on the sense of achievement gained from the experience of a night in an ice bedroom. Emboldened by a memorable

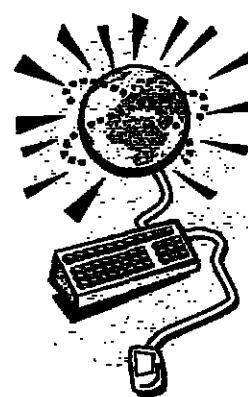
meal, I went to reception and booked in for the next night, my last of three. Heidi, the guide, remarked cryptically: "I am on duty next morning." By now I had seen that silence, solitude and snow – and bracing, unpolluted Arctic air – could be more restful than noisy days among thousands on sunny beaches. Most of the older visitors seemed content, in the long evenings, to relax in their cabins or dine and drink in that excellent restaurant. But it did not seem right to leave without doing at least one of the more adventurous outdoor things enjoyed by younger, fitter visitors.

Next day a dog-sled team steered by an experienced trainer hurtled me mile on mile over frozen lakes and through pine forests, a scary and exhilarating ride (with more time you can learn to handle the team yourself). We rested on what, in the summer, would be an island in a fast-flowing river, where coffee was brewed and a snack provided in a log hut. We discussed the Arctic, modern civilisation, life itself. Then we returned in the 3pm twilight, against a biting wind. After this I did feel sufficiently acclimatised to sleep my night in the Ice Hotel.

We – that night's 16 guests – sensed a degree of bonding on the brink of a feat of endurance, as we received our instructions: wear only long johns and a sweater, don't wash your face or apply cream before retiring, climb into your sleeping-bag (withstanding temperatures of minus 35C) very fast, pull your clothes in with you to warm them for the morning. My room was large, its walls decorated with snow-reliefs of local scenes.

"Did you sleep well?" people asked next morning in the sauna. "Yes – though I hadn't thought so," I said. My night had been silent, thick snow walls offering complete sound insulation. But I dreamt that I was awake in these compelling surroundings, not dead to the world, on reindeer skins covering a board laid on a mattress set on blocks of ice. In fact, I had rested well and warmly in this eerie, candlelit stateroom in the world's biggest igloo. At 7.30am Heidi had appeared with beakers of warm berry juice. And it had taken her some while to rouse me fully from a sound repose.

Sweden on



WEBWORLD

THE "WHERE DO I START?" SITE:

Introduction to the Land of the Midnight Sun, with tips on transport and lodging: www.gosweden.org/northern

Good tours available on: www.travel.com.uk/tours/tours/lapland

KER-CHING! THE BEST DEAL SITE:

Lots of sites offer cheap deals to Sweden. The www.gosweden.org site has good links to some of these. A superb site for general advice, travel stories and suggestions on how to find the best value deals out there – especially if you are looking for a Eurobreak – is: www.globebreakers.co.uk

TRAVELLERS' TALES SITE:

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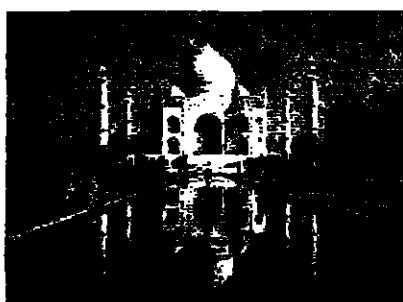
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Fred Mawer asks whether tax-free shopping is a traveller's right, or a profitable mark-up for airlines and ferries

No duty – but no bargain either

Millions of leaflets distributed in airports, planes and ferries this summer have drawn attention to the consequences of abolishing duty-free and tax-free shopping on June 30, 1999 within the European Union.

Why such a fuss about being able to buy cut-price spirits and cigarettes? Intra-EU duty-free is worth £1 billion in the UK alone. Airports, airlines and ferry companies use the massive profits on duty-free sales that come from inflated mark-ups to subsidise other parts of their business. Abolition should have happened in January 1993, but duty-free operators were granted a period of grace to find other sources of revenue to replace their

'People buying duty-free are often being ripped off'

profitable duty-free sales. However, fronted by a vociferous lobby group called the Duty-Free Confederation, they are campaigning doggedly for a further stay of execution.

The arguments against abolition: The Duty-Free Confederation argues that, since the EU is years away from a true single market and has 15 separate fiscal jurisdictions, the proposed eradication of intra-EU duty-free is "a triumph of dogma over common sense". Backed by surveys funded by the travel industry, it also claims abolition would have a serious impact on the industry, the effects of which would be largely borne by the public. This is because airports, airlines and ferry companies use profits from duty-free and tax-free sales to invest in facilities and keep ticket prices down.

BAA, which operates seven UK airports including Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, calculates that abolition would jeopardise about 30 per cent of its £400 million annual income from duty-free and tax-free sales, and around 1,900 jobs. It estimates it would need to raise aircraft landing charges by the equivalent of 75p per person to recoup some of the losses. Smaller regional airports, where EU traffic is as

high as 90 per cent, will be even harder hit.

Airlines, as Roger Burnell, managing director of Britannia Airways, put it, "will suffer a double whammy through the increase in landing charge and the loss of in-flight duty-free sales" (about £4.50 per person per flight on Britannia). Studies sponsored by the pro duty-free lobby published last week calculate that the cost of a package holiday in the EU will rise by £10 to £14. Apparently these higher prices will mean many holidaymakers will choose non-EU destinations instead: Greece, for example, may receive 600,000 fewer holidaymakers a year.

Abolition would hit the ferry industry the hardest. It is claimed that on services between Britain and the Continent, the result would be the loss of nearly 9,000 jobs, ticket prices rising by 10 per cent and the possible closure of 11 routes.

William Gibbons, director of the Passenger Shipping Association (which represents the ferry companies), says: "Routes will close if duty-free goes." Though operators may start selling duty-paid goods, he explains their profit margins are minimal compared with duty-free sales. In this respect, Hoverspeed is stealing a march on other ferry companies by opening a duty-paid wine shop in its Boulogne terminal next month. Interestingly, presuming abolition happens, not even Customs yet knows whether beer and wine sold on cross-Channel ferries will be subject to low French or high UK duty rates.

The arguments for abolition: The European Commission says intra-EU duty-free flies in the face of the existence of the single market. It argues that shops on ferries and in airports, as well as sales on planes, have an unfair competitive advantage over high street retailers (and Eurostar, which is not allowed to sell duty-free and tax-free goods). Moreover, their tax-free status effectively amounts to a state



In France, it is cheaper to buy wine and beer from a hypermarket than a duty-free shop – and how many of us know the excise rates on the alcohol we are buying?

aid and discriminates against those who do not travel. The Commission claims that using duty-free sales is a bizarre way to fund transport and shows how high the operators' profit margins are. It also rubbishes many of the calamitous conse-

quences of abolition cited by the duty-free lobby. The large number of predicted job losses are judged to be "probably enormously exaggerated". Tax-paid shopping will continue to flourish post-abolition in airports and on ferries, not

least because they have a captive market.

Geoffrey Martin, senior spokesman for the Commission in the UK, admits that abolition will probably lead to a few ferry routes disappearing, but does not accept that

the price of plane tickets will necessarily rise. He also accuses operators of using their shops' duty-free and tax-free advantages to inflate their profits. Eurotunnel was initially outspoken against the extension of duty-free in 1993,

since it was thought to benefit Le Shuttle's competitors. However, following the success of duty-free sales in Le Shuttle's terminals (about £3 million a week this summer), the company has softened its position.

Yet Bruce McKendrick, Eurotunnel's retail director, argues that "customers buying duty-free are often being ripped off without even realising it. They see a significant discount from the high street price and think it must be good value. They don't realise that operators are often effectively pocketing much of the uncollected duty for themselves".

From the customer's point of view, duty-free is often something of a misnomer – duty-reduced might be a more accurate term. The charts show how great an extra mark-up the leading duty-free operators are making over a high street supermarket – as much as £6.50 on a bottle of whisky and nearly £11 on 200 cigarettes.

A Holiday Which? report published this month compares cross-Channel operators' duty-free prices with those in French hypermarkets: while cigarettes and perfume were cheaper if bought duty-free, spirits cost roughly the same and wine and beer were cheaper in France.

CIGARETTES AND ALCOHOL: HOW THE BIG OPERATORS MAKE THEIR MONEY

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Excise duty and VAT	£9.76	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cost of whisky and mark-up	£4.73	£7.55	£8.94	£11.25	£7.70
Extra mark-up over Tesco	N/A	£2.82	£4.21	£6.52	£2.97

200 Benson & Hedges	Tesco	BAA	Britannia	Stena	Eurotunnel
Price	£29.19	£13.00	£13.99	£15.99	£12.60
Excise duty and VAT	£24.09	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cost of cigarettes and mark-up	£5.10	£13.00	£13.99	£15.99	£12.60
Extra mark-up over Tesco	N/A	£7.90	£8.89	£10.89	£7.50

Tourists face dilemma after Egypt bomb

THE Foreign Office this week warned visitors to Cairo to be extra vigilant after Thursday's bomb attack in which nine tourists died – but it has stopped short of telling visitors to avoid the Egyptian capital. This means that nervous holidaymakers should check with their tour company before cancelling a forthcoming holiday, as they may not get all their money back if they do so.

However, several major British operators have pulled clients out, or offered them the option of altering or cancelling their holidays without penalty. Thomson, the biggest British operator to

Egypt, moved just under 100 holidaymakers from Cairo to Luxor on Thursday evening, and is not taking any others to the capital at present. "We acted immediately, because the terrorists said they were targeting tourists," said a spokeswoman.

Saga, the over-50s holiday company, has also pulled out of the city centre but is offering its customers the option of staying near the pyramids at Giza, or rebooking or cancelling their trip.

But Bales Tours, one of the oldest-established operators to Egypt, is continuing to take clients into Cairo, and

does not necessarily offer full refunds to anyone who cancelled. Claims would be considered on an individual basis, said a spokesman.

Security in Cairo is now being drastically stepped up, as happened following the attack on Greek tourists in Cairo in April 1996, which killed 18. Tourist numbers fell in the early Nineties, when militants attacked holidaymakers on Nile cruise boats on several occasions, killing some tourists, including a British woman.

CATH URQUHART

ALLOWANCES

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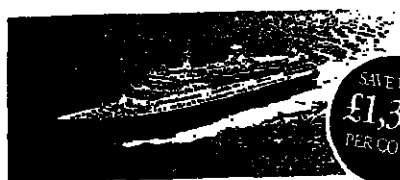
■ Duty-free allowances within and outside the EU are 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars; two litres of wine; one litre of spirits or two litres of fortified wine; 60ml perfume; 250ml eau de toilette. Tax-free allowances for all other goods (excluding including beer) are £75 within the EU, £145 outside. Within the EU, you can buy your full allowance each time you cross a border.

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AROUND THE WORLD: A WEEKEND GUIDE

JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

Snowshoe shuffles

IF YOU dislike the whole business of skiing you might prefer to try snowshoeing, which is easier to learn, cheaper and it also enables you to get off the beaten piste and into the wilds. It is rather like walking on tennis rackets, say fans.

Headwater Holidays (01606 48699) has special Snowshoeing Weeks starting on January 14 and February 28. These are based at Aitron, home of the French Nordic Championship, on the Vercors plateau above Grenoble. The weeks cost £397-£488 if you drive yourself, £579-£658 by air, including half-board hotel accommodation, equipment hire, tuition and guiding.

Water board

MONOPOLY addicts can play a real-life version of the board game next Saturday by joining the Great British Monopoly Challenge organised by the Royal British Legion in aid of the participants' choice of charities.

Teams of up to four leave King's Cross and Liverpool Street railway stations at 9am and head for Regent Street (Hamleys), Piccadilly (The Ritz) and the Water Works (the London Aquarium), acquiring bounty or forfeits as they go. The event ends with judging and fireworks in Battersea Park. Entry fees are £50 per team plus £125 worth of badges for resale in aid of the charities. More information from the Royal British Legion (0171-973 7350).

FROM November 11, Eastern and Oriental Express (0171-805 5100) has a 22-hour rail service between Bangkok and Chiang Mai. The train will stop at Phitsanulok to see the ruined royal palace and temples of the 13th-century city of Sukhothai. The journey costs £610 for full board, tours and one-way internal flight; a package including the rail journey, three nights' B&B in Chiang Mai and flight back to Bangkok costs £937. The Bangkok to Singapore rail journey, which takes three days, costs £900.

Tree houses

MAKE the most of autumn in log cabins belonging to the Forestry Commission (0131-314 6100) in Scotland, Cornwall, and Yorkshire. Three-night breaks cost £125 for up to six people per cabin in September and October. £89 in November. Canoeing, mountain biking, pony trekking, hill walking and, off Cornwall, shark fishing are available. Much of the forest surrounding the cabins is evergreen conifers, but there is plenty of mixed woodland nearby, particularly at Deepark on the edge of Bodmin Moor, while the ancient Dalavich oakwoods are only a short walk from the cabins at Lochaweside in the Highlands.

Snail tales

NOT many museums invite their visitors to eat their exhibits, but Ferme la Caracole encourages plenty of sampling during guided tours. It breeds a quarter of a million escargots each year and is its largest live specimen is an African snail weighing 300 grams. The farm in Saint Florent-sur-Auzonnet in Languedoc-Roussillon is open at weekends, and visitors pay Fr20 for the tour, Fr25 if they taste as well. (Telephone from the UK: 0033 466 25 65 70.)

If you are more of a goat enthusiast, head for the Cascade Goat Reserve at Roquefort, just north of Carcassonne, which has 13 live breeds and an auberge specialising in goat cuisine. Open at weekends, the entrance fee is Fr15. (Telephone from the UK: 0033 466 25 36 36.)

Cargo cruising

WOULD-BE Conrads and Somerset Maughams will welcome the brochure on passenger cargo voyages from Strand Voyages (0171-836 6363), even though most trips now take place on container ships rather than on traditional banana boats and tramp steamers.

Sailing from Felixstowe via Antwerp and Le Havre, Canada Maritime's two 34,000-tonne fully ice-strengthened container ships cross the Atlantic on ten-day voyages to Montreal. Both ships carry five passengers at a cost of £985 — with no single supplements. A 104-day round-the-world voyage costs £8,065 (£8,500 for single passengers) on German container vessels. These also leave



Rainbow-faced gelada baboon, one of the rare mammals that lives in the highlands of Ethiopia

from Felixstowe and call at 20 ports including New York, Tahiti, Hong Kong, Suez and Salerno on their voyage to Auckland and back. The ships carry ten passengers, who eat with the German officers. A few banana boats do still exist: Raffles runs 35-day round trips to Suriname and Guyana for £1,980, and 28 days to Belize and Honduras for £1,850, both from Portsmouth.

There are snags — or benefits: no bingo, ballroom dancing or other entertainment on board. You need to be flexible about dates which can be changed to suit the

cargo. And could you face the same nine faces at breakfast for 104 days? If so, the brochure makes good dreaming.

Animal magic

WEIRD and wonderful endemic species have evolved in Ethiopia's "highland islands" because of the mountains' isolation, altitude and climate. Among the larger mammals are the huge mountain nyala antelope, the rainbow-faced gelada baboon, the red simian jackal which could well be a wolf

or a fox, and the giant mole-rat. For birdwatchers, there are black-winged lovebirds, Abyssinian catbirds and perhaps a glimpse of an ankober serin, which looks as "boring as a sparrow", but since its discovery in 1976 has been seen only rarely. Naturetrek (01962 733051) has organised its first ten-day natural history tour to the Bale Mountains and Shoa Highlands which leaves on November 28. The cost of the tour is £990 which includes flights and full board in lodges.

WEEKEND COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

SEPTEMBER 26-28

Tales from the riverbank: Fish for tench, carp, rudd and perch on private waters in Norfolk. Details and bookings from Angling Travel (01263 761602). Prices, all inclusive, from £180.

National Trust working holidays: Weekend conservation breaks repairing and restoring the summer houses at National Trust properties all over Britain. Weekend rates from £20, including accommodation and meals. Full details available from National Trust Working Holidays Brochure (0891 51775) — premium rates.

Calderdale Walking Festival: The opening weekend of a two-week festival, with walks, lectures and courses on outdoor skills. Accommodation available. Full details and festival programme from Halifax Tourist Information Centre (01422 368725); Hebden Bridge TIC (01422 843831); Todmorden TIC (01706 818181).

How to write for television: Enjoy your sewing machine: Life and figure drawing: Three courses this weekend at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Winter course brochure available. Weekend rates: £159.20 residential, £69.20 tuition only.

A fungus foray: At the Leonard Wildlife Centre, William, Taunton, Somerset (01984 640320). A weekend in the woods looking for fungi. From £127 full board, or £102 non-residential.

Masterworks of art and music: A weekend of illustrated lectures, exploring masterpieces by some of the greatest artists and composers. No technical knowledge required. At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Sussex (01798 865306). Prices, full board and accommodation from £114. Non-residential from £90.

Cotswold walking weekends: From the Burford House Hotel, Burford, Oxon (01993 823151). Weekend walking along the River Windrush, to Blenheim Palace and Kelmscott Manor, the home of William Morris. Prices from £180 per couple, for two nights.

Rag rug making: Silversmithing and jewellery: Gourmet cooking weekend: Tandem skydiving: Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083), from £40 for rugmaking, to £210 for skydiving.

Winchester Literary Festival: Celebrating Jane Austen and John Keats with readings and talks from modern writers. Full details and programme from Winchester Tourist Information Centre (01962 840500). Hotel and B&B accommodation available.

OCTOBER 3-5

Flower arranging: Gardening skills: China mending: Basket making: Practical skill courses from Acorn Activities, Herefordshire (01432 830083). Prices from £80 per weekend, according to the course.

Cylinders to CDs: a history of recorded sound: Gold thread embroidery: Two courses this weekend at the Alston Hall Residential College, Preston, Lancashire (01772 784661). Prices from £75 to £80 for two nights, inclusive.

Suffolk's Medieval Houses Calligraphy: This weekend at the Field Studies Centre, Flaxton Mill, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex (01206 298283). Prices from £72 to £102.

Walking in the autumn landscape: Guided walks on the North Downs of Surrey from the Juniper Hall Field Studies Centre, Dorking (01306 883849). Prices from £79 to £102, according to accommodation.

Memoir writing: The work of George Frederick Handel: A patchwork workshop: At Higham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake, Cocker-mouth, Cumbria (017687 76276). Price £112 inclusive.

Writing poetry: Mediaeval art: At the Wedgwood Memorial College, Barlaston, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire (01782 372105). Price per course, £70, inclusive.

Illustrating autumn fruits and foliage: Myths, dreams and impossibilities: At the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Cambridge (01954 210636). Price £117 per course inclusive.

Golfing enthusiasts' weekend in Scotland: at Balbirnie House, Markinch, Fife (01992 610066). Two nights, including one round on Balbirnie Park golf course, with half-board accommodation, from £99.50 per person per night.

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Question 2: 7 (add the numbers top right and top left and divide by three)

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Q Is it impolite to let your guests see the video recorder switch on automatically while they are present? Does it imply that, but for them, you'd sooner be watching *Match of the Day*, *Neighbours*, the lottery etc? Or, as a bit of gamesmanship, should you deliberately set it for a classical music/intellectual programme (not necessarily with a tape in the machine) and openly refer to it?

D.V.T. Oxon.

A Your letter illustrates our ambivalent attitude towards technology, and reminds me of the length people go to to conceal their televisions (I know of one man who hides his behind a painting entitled *The Distant Horizon*). This being said, none but the most paranoid guests would assume that your video springing into action suggested a slur on their company. So programme away. However, I would recommend recording only the items of genuine interest.



Q Please advise me on how to stop house guests raiding the larder and guzzling food that I have earmarked for specific meals. I am happy for them to take items intended for snacks.

George Dava, Morayshire.

A Try writing out each day's menu, explaining what each meal is to consist of, eg "Sat lunch: soup, cheese and salad. Sat dinner: roast lamb, onion sauce, new potatoes, raspberries and cream." Stick the notes in the larder and/or on the fridge, and draw everyone's attention to them with the words "I've posted the menus for all meals in case any of you are allergic to specific foodstuffs." Everyone should get the message.

Q May I tell you a story about "manners", certainly not modern although I think it may still apply. My grandmother, born in 1852 in a humble home, was, because of family illness, bundled into a boarding school at short notice. At the first meal she attended the mistress at her table requested: "Two plates for Miss Emily please." The plates were fetched and solemnly laid under the poor child's elbows. This sad little tale has certainly kept my elbows off dining-tables for the past 80 years.

Mrs K.M. Cook, Broadstone.

A Thank you for your letter. The schoolmistress would probably need industrial quantities of plates if she worked in a girls' boarding school today.

Q My friend is giving a birthday party for her seven-year-old daughter, to which our three children (nine, four and three) have been invited. Unfortunately,

because of a previous family engagement, none of them can go. Apparently my friend's little girl is utterly miserable about this. What can we do to make amends?

Mrs G. Clark, Huddersfield.

A I suggest that your children host a small party for her at your house, with presents, cakes and all the trimmings. Such a treat will delight any little girl.

Q My father vehemently believed that women were the fairer sex and should be treated accordingly. Years of clips around the ear have brainwashed me into the following behaviour. First, I rocket to my feet whenever my girlfriend wants to go to the lavatory in a restaurant, much to her acute embarrassment. Second, I hold doors open for hours on end (particularly tricky at Harrods tourists think you work there). Third, I offer my seat to women, regardless of age, on the Tube (never advisable when the young lady has a shaved head and is wearing army boots). What does the modern gentleman do?

James Russell, London W10.

A It is still polite for a man to stand up for a woman when she enters a room, leaves the table in a restaurant and so on, although the Nasa-like lift-off you suggest is overdoing it. Try a more graceful ascent. Holding open doors in public should be similarly undramatic. Just keep moving while briefly holding the door. This technique, although occasionally ill-fated when practised by the novice, is foolproof once mastered. When offering your seat on the Tube, concerns for age have now largely replaced those of gender. Thus, modern manners suggest that any young person should surrender their seat to anybody who is old (or, indeed, infirm or pregnant).

Q I read with interest your guidelines on social kissing (Weekend, September 6). My question, writing as someone who loathes the habit, is how can I avoid these unwanted assaults?

Mrs J.M. MacKay, Edinburgh.

A You are not alone. I know a Hong Kong hostess who wore a large cage-like hat to deter kisses at her Chinese New Year party. I'm afraid it is not polite to refuse a social kiss, although subtle body language can act as a strong deterrent. On meeting, immediately shake hands, with just enough tension in your elbow to discourage the other person from lunging. Keeping your head quite vertical reinforces the message.

● The author is associate editor of GQ.

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London EC1 9XN.



WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

CHEAPER

- a. A wagtail
- b. A liar
- c. A bidder

CAVENDISH

- a. A carriage
- b. A cloak
- c. Cake tobacco

CHITTY

- a. The chuffchaff
- b. A cream cake
- c. Lean and pinched

CORRUMP

- a. To sneeze
- b. To mar
- c. The buttocks

Answers on page 21

TWO BRAINS

"The experts tell you that, as you get older, your brain shrinks and you can't remember so much. But it's actually the reverse. If you compare my results with 1993, the amount of information that I memorised this year has doubled since then, even though my brain is supposedly shrinking. So it's simply not true. It's a case of if you don't use it, you lose it. The answer is: exercise your brain daily as I do and it will get stronger." — World Memory Champion Dominic O'Brien, after his successful 1997 defence of his title.

Question 1:
Which is the odd word out?
Terig, Nelfei, Odling, Retmahp

Question 2:
Insert the missing number
16 9 11
 13 5
16 ? 5

Answers on page 27.

... AND THERE'S AN ALARMING LACK OF GRAVITY, DIGBY. MAYDAY! MAYDAY!



CROSSWORDS

by Brian Greer

Fine judgment is needed to decide what words and phrases are acceptable for inclusion in the crossword. We rely mainly on three dictionaries, namely the Concise Oxford, Collins, and Chambers. The last of these contains many more archaic and obscure words, including my favourite, "taghairm", defined thus: "in the Scottish Highlands, divination; esp. inspiration sought by lying in a bullock's hide behind a waterfall". As a rule of thumb, any word which is not in both the C.O.D. and Collins is suspect, while any word that is in neither is taboo.

I also follow the C.O.D. lead in trying to avoid offensive, or

potentially offensive, words (please let me know if you come across any cases that concern you). Generally, too, we are rather prudish, though I must take personal responsibility for the clue: "In which three couples get together for sex (5)".

Proper nouns require even more delicate judgments as to whether they are reasonably familiar. Unlike Jowett, the polymathic Master of Balliol who turned up in the Qualifying Puzzle for this year's championship, and of whom it was said that what he didn't know wasn't knowledge, I work on the basis that if I don't know something, it is too obscure (but by no means always the converse).

Collins Dictionary, which contains proper nouns, is a useful rough guide as to what can reasonably be considered well known, but in the end, subjective judgments are unavoidable. One absolute rule is that we avoid any references to living people, the sole exception being ER to refer to the monarch.

Our overall aim is that the crossword should rarely stump, solely through obscurity, a solver who does not have reference works to hand. On the other hand, one of the spin-offs from doing crosswords is the addition of interesting new words to one's vocabulary ("jobsword", "ambibiter", and "anecdoteage" spring to mind).

PICTURE LINE

READERS are invited to suggest what the person in the picture below is saying.



The winning caption for last week's picture competition was submitted by Brian Davies, of Blewbury, Oxfordshire.



Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, E1 9XN.

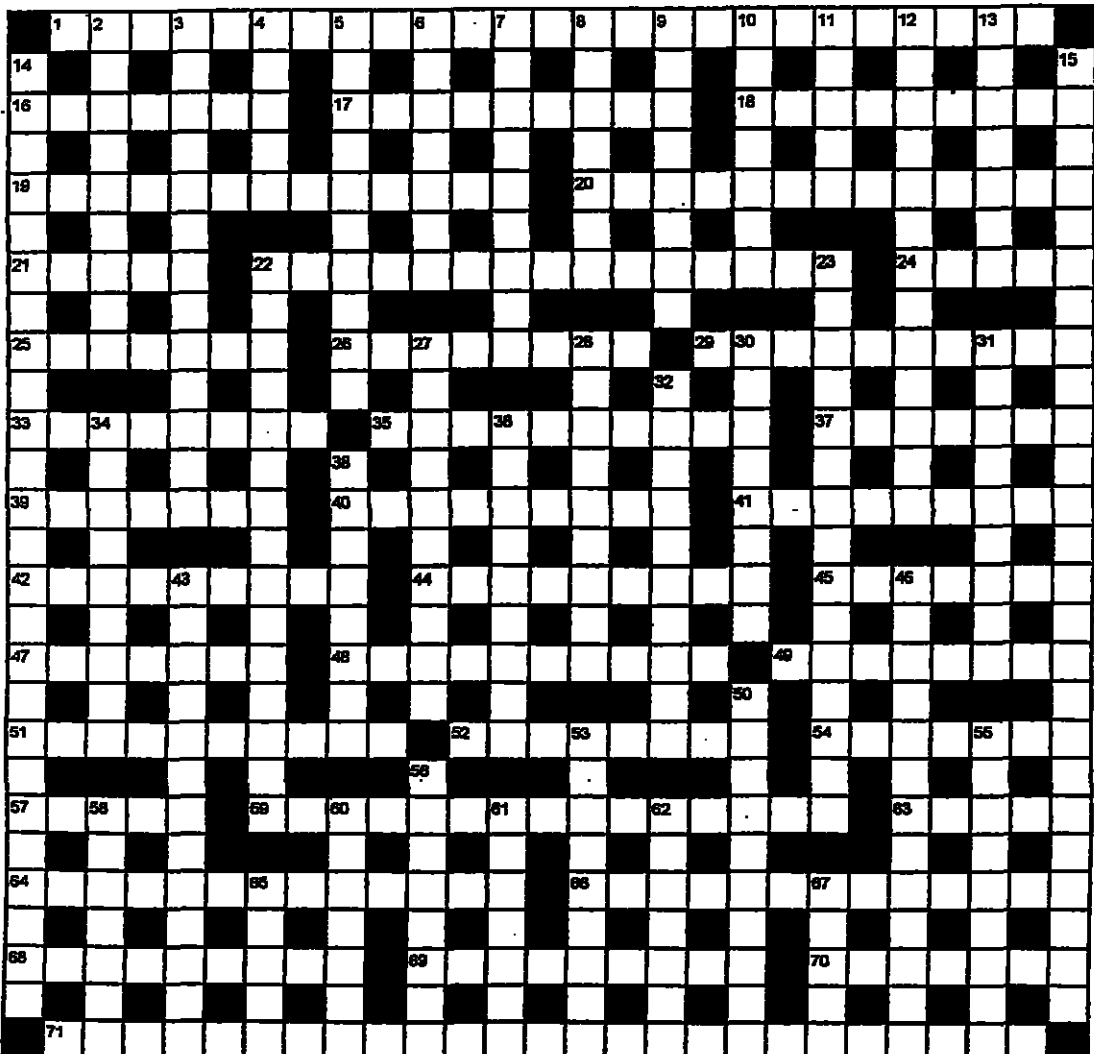
The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, September 24.

JUMBO CROSSWORD 128

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £105, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from silver-plated black resin, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 128, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Monday September 29. The names of the winners will be published in Weekend on Saturday, October 4



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ACROSS

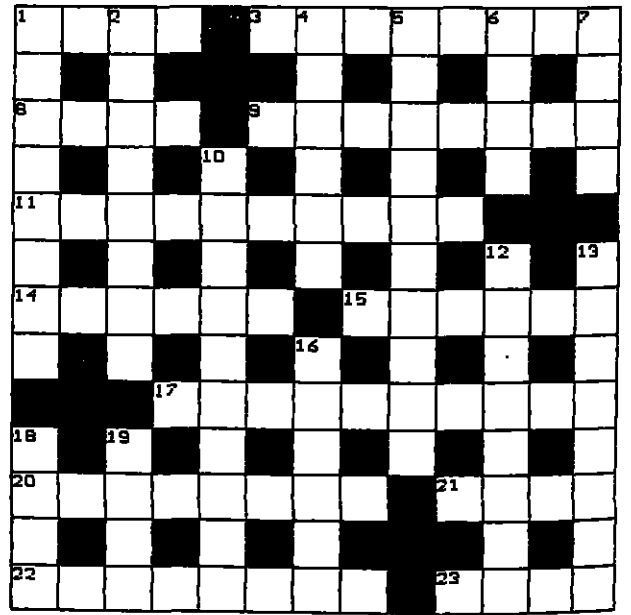
- 1 American playwright's query regarding Orlando producer (4,2,3,5)
- 16 Where Wedgwood's potters were regularly dexterous, turning for appearance (7)
- 17 Author churning out five English sonnets (9)
- 18 News channels assess the worth of dropping half of old items (9)
- 19 Vivien or Victoria? (4,2,3,4)
- 20 Marian dressed in maroon cloth (5,8)
- 21 If this turned, would you notice? (5)
- 22 Conservative's attitude in a way makes good sense (5-10)
- 24 One following king for divine influence (5)
- 25 Region a county's reorganised — but nothing's given away (7)
- 26 The first person to tell the story (8)
- 29 I've a passing interest (10)
- 33 Kernel from Chile used in mixing coral red dye (8)
- 35 She's in charge, mother complains before son enters (10)
- 37 Paint remover blowing head for drug taker (7)
- 39 Dyestuff processed from corn oil (7)
- 40 What brigadier may come to when flying? (3,6)
- 41 Rat badly on sister, perhaps? She would do (9)
- 42 Nagging little sister determined to go outside (9)
- 44 Card game that's right by Scotsman — like a Scots mathematician (9)
- 45 Having the bomb, Greek character's easily understood (7)
- 47 Drop bad tennis shot after returning flyer (7)
- 48 What uprose with Lias rocks, perhaps? (10)
- 49 Take a plaster after accident in the gymnasium (8)
- 51 Finished exams about English country music (10)
- 52 Damage count's old fortification (8)
- 54 Little air that is dry in 50% of Arabia (7)
- 57 Birthmarks on heads never are entirely visible, one found (5)
- 59 Did they have some distance to go in achieving world unity? (6,2,7)
- 63 Eastern ruler gives great warrior diamonds (8)
- 64 Vote in — if Liberal's almost organised and able to take charge (13)
- 66 Where one can entertain with signal success? (9,4)
- 68 Company going to a church gallery like pressed flowers, perhaps (9)
- 69 Yorkshireman's taken over train route built originally for cross-country transport (5,4)
- 70 Partially viewed a Centaur or a Lapith in the early light (7)

- 71 Show of optimism in comedian's refusal to quit performing? (5,6,4,6,4)

DOWN

- 2 63 books by American historian (9)
- 3 Language, too — Caribbean's wrong! (5-8)
- 4 What is bound to start embarrassment in lent? (5)
- 5 Cleaning up having arranged strange bet (10)
- 6 Found, as Caesar noted briefly, crossing the Rubicon? (3-4)
- 7 Girl cried with fear when panicked (9)
- 8 Accustomed to hold son safe in case of loss? (7)
- 9 One offering head of gods some honeyed drink, it's related (8)
- 10 One put up — put up a long time around one of the digs (7)
- 11 Read about a family of herons (5)
- 12 Depraved lingo is earthy? He'll allow no filth to cross one's lips (4,9)
- 13 Some call a volt-ampere an old measure (7)
- 14 Divorce decree, possibly a source of conflict in the US (11,2,12)
- 15 The nature of a hymn (3,9,5,3,5)
- 22 Five men left home for the proms (5,6,4)
- 23 Enthusiast taken in by charming New York president makes nothing at all (5,5,5)
- 27 Fast bird showing the way to ski (10)
- 28 Assume too much, ignoring propriety? (9)
- 30 Putting forward one to participate in military assignment (8)
- 31 Put power behind tool (9)
- 32 As live US broadcast in colour could be? (10)
- 34 Hurries after birds — fair targets? (9)
- 36 Nero's mother keeping a firm grasp on pain when tortured (9)
- 38 Shrewish wife, cross and almost lean before exercising (8)
- 43 With reasoned argument, 1 class it disturbed to hold doll upside-down (13)
- 46 Chapter has note on fluid fine and cunning in classical structure (9,4)
- 50 It's all around the world — poisoner, he's murdered! (10)
- 53 Mark in score lent force to wind (5,4)
- 55 Fish has no tail to support means of propulsion (9)
- 56 He's taken after Bantus, turning brown (8)
- 58 Pretentious talk: Introduction to English Trees (7)
- 60 Bad temper showing in an Eastern Texas town (7)
- 61 Garb "white-collar" evokes? Essentially, the reverse (7)
- 62 Abstract painter reveals his in intuitive perception (7)
- 65 To sleep in that thing's not appropriate (5)
- 67 One magician's character (5)

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1204

ACROSS

- 1 Worthless, seed, cover (4)
- 3 For discriminating customers (8)
- 8 Back of neck (4)
- 9 Stiff open-weave fabric (8)
- 11 Close down (business) (4,2,4)
- 14 In lenient fashion (6)
- 15 Plan, outline; plot (6)
- 17 Very angry indeed (7,3)
- 20 Hostile (6)
- 21 18 round saint's head (4)
- 22 Stimulant in tea, coffee (5)
- 23 Feeble (4)

DOWN

- 1 Generous; attractive (8)
- 2 Sevenfold (8)
- 4 Commendation (6)
- 5 Up-to-date facilities (in house) (3,3,4)
- 6 Bird; airborne toy (4)
- 7 Shade (of colour) (4)
- 10 Fr. beheading instrument (10)
- 12 Penetrate; diffuse through (8)
- 13 Impasse; sounds like Sir Leicester — (Bleak House) (8)
- 16 Wrench (joint) (8)
- 18 Flat plate may be compact (4)
- 19 Feudal land-holding (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1203

ACROSS: 1 Rhea 4 Scansion 8 Graduate 9 Rife 10 Shame 11 Fan mail 13 Pounce 15 Dodge 18 Weighty 20 Agape 23 Trio 24 Operatic 25 Internet 26 Sped DOWN: 2 Harsh 3 Abdomen 4 Scar 5 Adelaide 6 Serum 7 Offside 10 Sip 12 Meldtown 14 Overrun 16 Dog days 17 Roe 19 Grove 21 Prize 22 Nert

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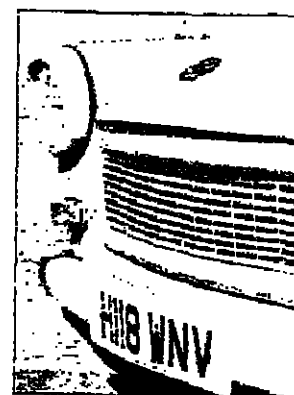
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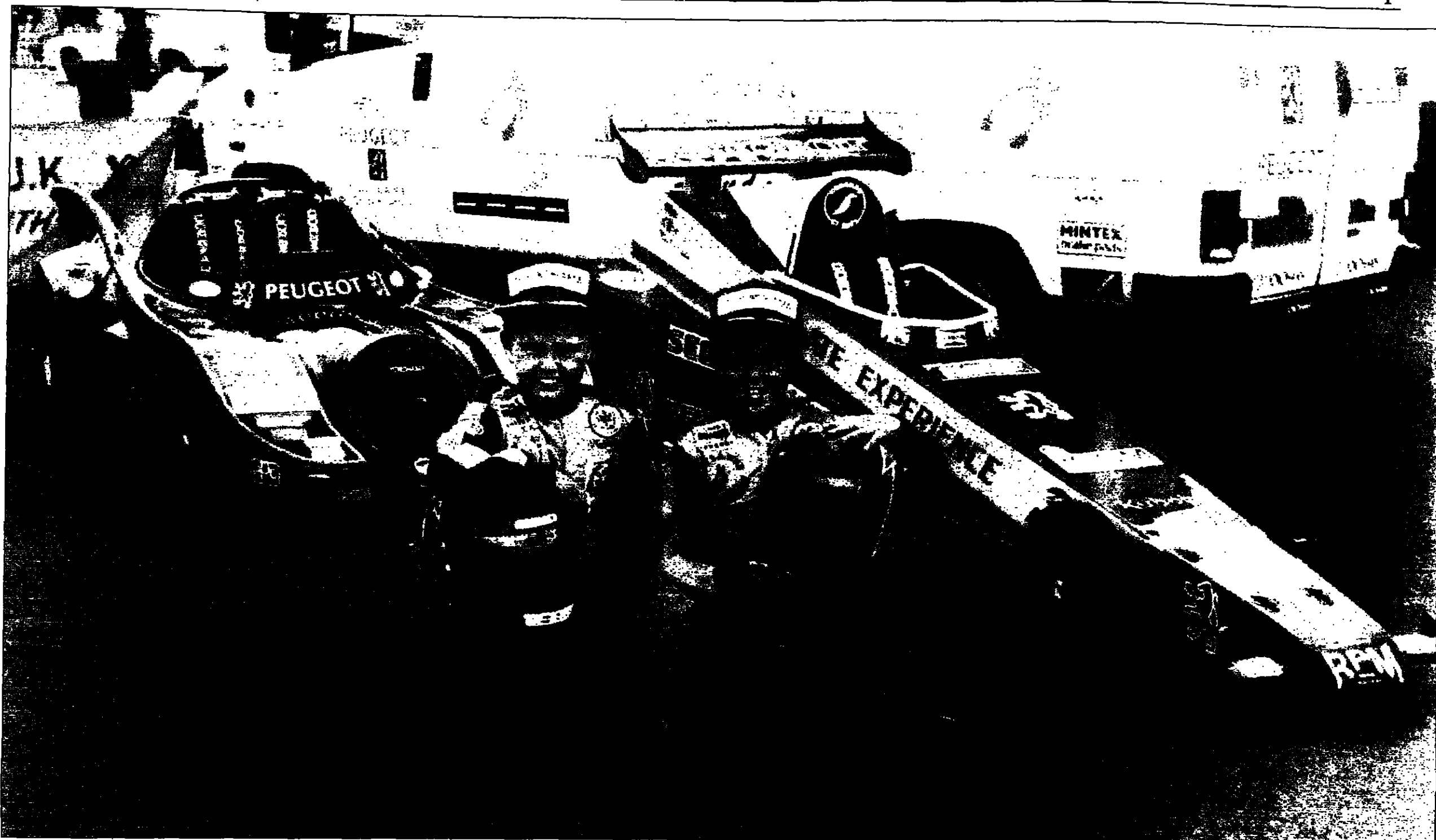
Readers
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worst
motors

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SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20 1997

Morag Preston meets the racer who became a record-breaker aged four, with his grandfather's help



Life's a drag when you're 11: cousins Daniel Rutter and Stephen Johnson with the specially built race machines that have made them a hit at Santa Pod racetrack. Stephen plans to become either a world champion — or a firefighter

Stephen Johnson says he has the best grandfather in the world. A common assumption among 11-year-old boys, but what makes Stephen's granddad so special is his fleet of hand-built racing cars designed especially for children.

Simple toys these are not. Stephen's first machine propelled him into the record books at the age of four. Now he is teamed with his cousin, and the pair of racetrack tyros are pursued by television cameras and autograph hunters.

The story began when Stephen was diagnosed with a rare disease and hospitalised nine years ago. To brighten his spirits, his grandfather promised to build him a racing car. It was a promise that fired Stephen's toddler imagination. He spent months in hospital studying pictures in motoring magazines, and set his mind on one machine — an American-style hot-rod.

Two years later, the feisty four-year-old broke his first world speed record, reaching 22.7mph along a quarter-mile strip. Three years after that, he broke his second world record. Seated behind the wheel of a mini-version of the Batmobile, he broke through a 20-second barrier over an eighth of a mile. Says his proud grandfather: "Stephen could drive before he could walk."

Stephen, and Daniel Rutter, his cousin of the same age, are pint-sized heroes in the world of junior drag racing. Crowds of 35,000 turn up to see them at

No kidding, it's the boy racers

Santa Pod Raceway, near Northampton. International television crews wait to capture them on film, and autograph hunters are often on their trail. Christened "The Kindred Race Team", they have attracted support from a range of sponsors. The boys, who both live in Cannock, near Birmingham, have raised thousands of pounds for charities, and Stephen's progress has given hope to parents of children with Hirschsprung's Disease, a rare bowel disorder.

Brian Eyre, Stephen's devoted grandfather, built his first vehicle from a bed frame and an old army generator engine. "It carried two children at about 20mph, until the centres fell out of the heavy-duty pram wheels," he says. Eyre went on to run a motor spares business in his native West Midlands, where he sold parts to a promising young racer called Nigel Mansell. Now, he is a semi-retired businessman, living in North Wales, who says



Grandfather Brian Eyre with his latest creation for the cousins. It should hit 60mph in less than three seconds

his hobby is rapidly turning into a full-time job.

The first American hot-rod that Eyre made was a perfect miniature. It came complete with an imitation V8 engine, although the real power came from two electric motors, a deep buttoned leather interior, and a stereophonic sound system. In 1992, "Bat Magic" was born, transformed from a

new car, using the Nascar body from "Burning Desire" with a new car underneath it. He is also working on a 12ft-long re-vamped version of "Ultimate Experience". Both cars will easily be able to reach 0-60mph in three seconds.

Each will have taken around 400 hours to complete, and will be worth at least £20,000. "It's worth every bit when you hear them crank up for the first time," says Eyre.

Stephen has his sights set on becoming either a world champion — or a firefighter. His walls are covered with posters of Nigel Mansell, and he looks forward to victory celebrations when chocolate gateaux is allowed as a special treat. Standing at just over 4ft 4in, his grandfather describes him as a "cool dude".

According to Eyre: "Stephen takes it all in his stride. As far as he's concerned there are only two speeds — flat out and stop — with nothing in between."

Unlike Stephen, cousin

design the car around them. You start off with the optimum design, and work around that. But the boys are always keen to tuck in.

"Although it's run around kids and charity, this team is as professional as any other. We have proper race suits, a proper pit set-up, on-board computers and even pit-to-car radio. At Santa Pod we can even patch in the pit-to-car radio to the public address

system so the crowd can hear the boys making their checks before a run.

"We try to keep the terminal speed down. Ultimate Experience will run a 17-second standing quarter. If the car crashed at 120mph it would be dangerous, but if we can keep the terminal speed down to 60mph with the amount of crash protection provided, the driver should be able to walk away from any accident."

... Even pedal power can put you in a league where the cars cost thousands



Replica engine under the bonnet, but it was Jodie Mahner's legs that won the race



As the finishing line approached, the pint-sized racers pedalled their little legs off, hitting speeds of up to 15mph as they battled for first place at the annual meeting of the Austin J40 Pedal Car Club.

Club president Alfred Ash, 85, was there to hand out prizes. But his involvement goes much deeper than that: he was part of the team who created the miniature car that has turned out to be a collector's item. Also at the meeting was his daughter Marcia, who test-drove the first version ever made.

In 1946, Ash's eight-year-old daughter accompanied him to the Austin production plant in Longbridge to put "Joy 1" to the test. A year later, the original design, based on the Austin 8 and Austin 10, was

abandoned in favour of a lighter model, based on the new Austin Devon. The original prototype, hand-built and finished in maroon, was rediscovered only last year. Snapped up by the Pedal Car Club for £3,200, it is currently on tour in the UK.

Leonard Lord, then managing director, decided that it would be a good idea to make the tiny cars from the Austin factory in Bargoed, South Wales. Ex-miners suffering from lung disease, exempt from heavy manual work, went to work on the cars, which weighed just 95lbs.

Designed as toys, Austin J40s (the "J" stood for Junior) were sometimes given away as part of a promotional package along with the full-scale version. Between 1948 and 1971, around 32,000 were

made at an original cost of £20 each (the full-scale version would have cost £400). More than 500 Austin J40s still exist, but they now sell at around £1,000 each.

Steel off-cuts from the full-scale cars were shipped overnight from Longbridge to Bargoed. Complete with a dummy engine, handbrake, chrome bumpers and hub cap, pneumatic tyres, horn, and working lights, the cars are faithful replicas of the adult version.

The cars are best suited to children aged between three and 13-years-old, although comedian Norman Wisdom once pedalled one for a film. Red was perhaps the most popular colour for the car, but it was also available in others, including blue, white, and sage green.

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THE NEW PRIMERA

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A new poster publicity campaign may make it appear that the Government is doing something to cut road deaths, but what is needed is better laws

Slower speeds take faster MPs

The campaign launched by the Government this week to cut road deaths caused by speeding ought to be welcomed by everyone. The poster showing William Blacklock, the teenager killed by a speeding motorist near his home, carries the phrase "at times we all drive a bit too fast", and if that sounds bland it surely strikes at the heart of the problem: yes, at times we all do.

There is no gainsaying the fact that if everyone stuck to the speed limit in built-up areas there would be fewer accidents and fewer deaths.

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

I have said before in this space that we live in a society that is fond of the grand gesture and not very good at paying attention to detail. Every time some emotive issue is placed in the public arena there is on the part of politicians a rush to legislate, a rush to be seen "doing

something". Often a quieter approach would have the same effect. Britain has too many laws that do not work properly, and much of the reason for them being ineffective is sloppy drafting. Stern punishments do have some effect in taking dangerous drivers off the road, but what are we to make of the law relating to dangerous driving itself?

One might have thought that the 19-year-old whose speeding led to the death of William Blacklock would have been charged with dangerous driving, but he was not. He was fined £150 for careless driving and £200 for having no insurance. The definition of dangerous within the meaning of the legislation is driving that is "far below acceptable standards".

This explains why we read of so many cases where a driver has



caused mayhem but is charged with a relatively minor offence. How is one to demonstrate in court what is an "acceptable standard"? How does the court define "far below"? How far is far? It is simply absurd that bad drivers are strolling away from courts because Parliament cannot be bothered to define offences tightly.

And then there is the lollipop lady. For the lollipop lady (I know some are men, but most are ladies) is another whose activity is undermined by bad drafting. Lollipop ladies, or school crossing attendants as they are formally known, are appointed by the local authority and the individual schools, but their right to do what they do and

the extent of the protection they offer is covered by the 1988 Road Traffic Act.

And, of course, lollipop ladies often operate on the very types of road that this week's campaign is all about. So let us consider a busy parent arriving at school with a seven-year-old pupil, plus two toddlers who have come along

because there is no one else to look after them.

The lollipop lady walks to the centre of the road and waves the family across. You would think that the parent and all three children were safely in the care of the lollipop lady, but they are not. Due to a positively lunatic piece of drafting, only children "of school age" are covered.

In theory the attendant could refuse to help the toddlers and the parent cross the road. This rarely happens, but it is a fact that there is no legal come-back either on the crossing attendant or the local authority, if either the parent or one of the non-school age children was to be knocked down by a car.

The Department of Transport told me this week that there is an "anomaly" in the Act and a draft amendment is awaiting some Parliamentary time. MPs return next month after their recess, so can we look forward to an amendment?

If it is not passed very soon, and if something is not done about the wording of the dangerous driving law very soon, we shall be forced to conclude that governments are good at high-profile advertising campaigns but less enamoured of unglamorous but effective work done behind the scenes.

Unhappy return for fan's stolen classic Lancia

An enthusiast must pay £2,000 to get his car back, says Tony Dawe

The final chapter in the long and scandalous saga of a stolen classic car will be written in the next few days when a 1937 Lancia Aprilia is finally returned to its rightful owner.

The story will not, however, have a happy ending. For David Watson, who had owned and loved the car for 25 years before its theft, must pay £2,000 to recover his own property and there are no signs of closing the legal loophole that could affect thousands of motorists.

Watson's problems arose because his Aprilia was purchased in good faith by a classic car enthusiast before he even realised it had disappeared. The new buyer had no way of knowing the car had been stolen and even if he had checked its ownership with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency he would have been denied the information.

As CAR 97 reported earlier this year, the first Watson knew of the theft was when he read a letter from Peter Willmer, the new owner, asking for information about the car in the Lancia Motor Club magazine.

Watson, a freelance designer of Lowestoft, Suffolk, thought he had done everything to protect his ownership. He had kept his receipt from 1961 for the car, the 15th built and one of the oldest surviving examples, still possessed the original registration documents and had re-registered the vehicle at his latest address with the DVLA.

His one mistake was to leave the car unattended in a lock-up garage - while he waited for the funds and time to restore it - for such a long time that the thief thought it was fair game. The thief, David Jones of St Albans, sold

the Aprilia to Tancred Barratt, Lancia specialists of Callow Hill near Kidderminster, who had in turn sold it to Willmer of Solihull, West Midlands, who began restoration work on the car.

Jones was eventually tracked down by police and fined £200 by St Albans magistrates in November last year. But that did not help Watson recover the car. He had already begun a civil action against Barratt and Willmer and the police were reluctant to intervene.

Watson hired a specialist to examine the car and the work done on it, produced his own report challenging the accuracy of the restoration work, arranged witness statements and photographs to back up his case.

A day before the trial earlier this month, the three men finally agreed, on legal advice, to settle the action out of court. Watson would have preferred to pursue the case but was warned of a large legal bill, running into £30,000 which he could face if he lost the action.

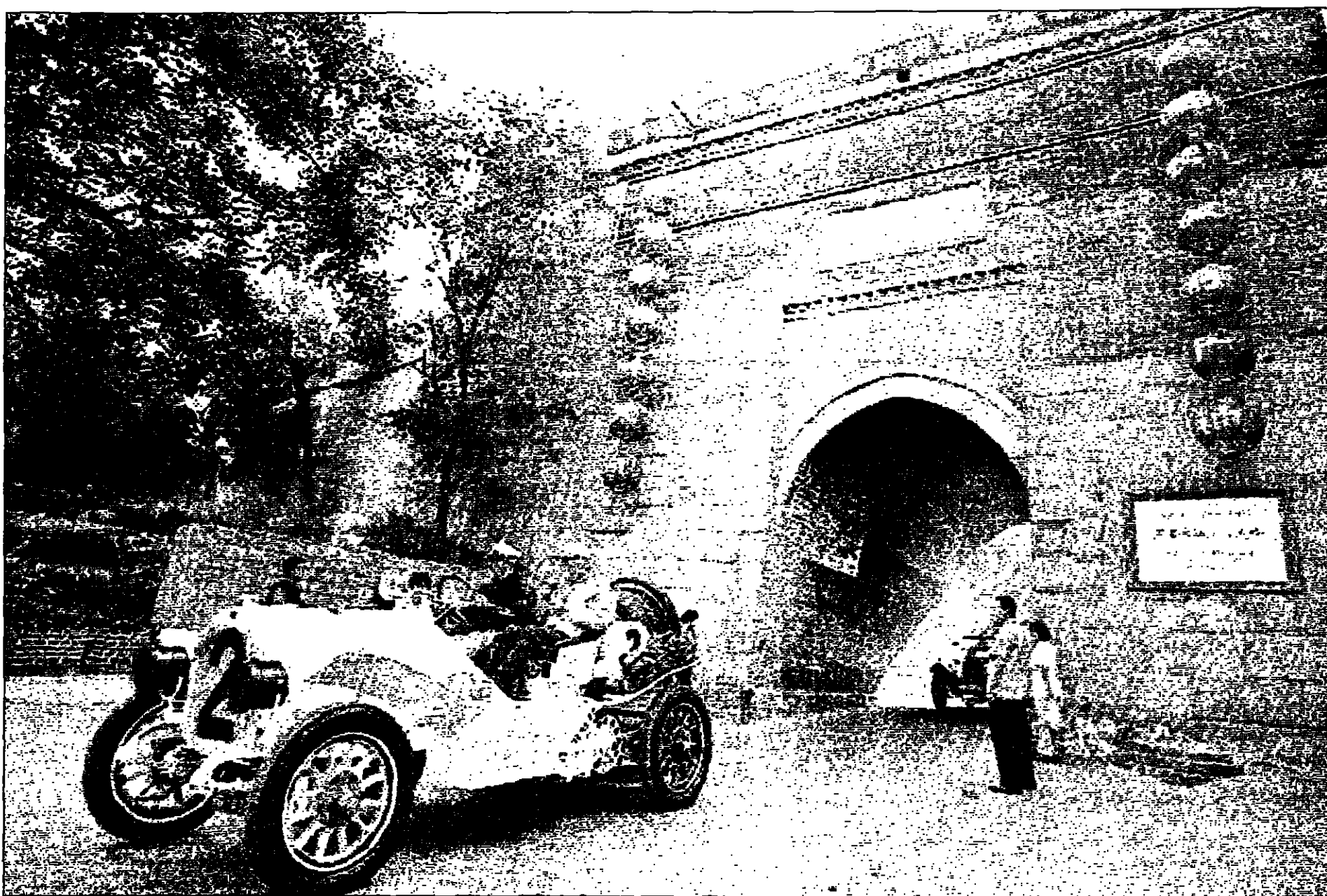
Under the terms of the agreement, Willmer was refunded the money he had paid Barratt for the car and its restoration, and will return the car when Watson has paid Barratt for the "betterment" of the vehicle.

"I will finish up having to pay £2,000 to get my car back minus many of the spare parts, which have disappeared," Watson says. "After nearly two years of trying to establish the facts conclusively and get back to the position before the theft, I have come out with considerably less. The episode has caused me considerable stress and taken up much of my time."



David Watson is now set to have his Lancia returned after settling out of court in a long and costly wrangle

Tibet beats the Phantom V



The 1907 La France sets off from the Great Wall of China for Lhasa (below right): sadly the car was forced to retire after its driver, Herman Layher, contracted hypothermia

So now Lord Montagu is hitch-hiking

I began to fear I was a jinx as we arrived in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa. Having set out from the Great Wall of China outside Beijing to the sound of Chinese dragons, firecrackers and drums, I was distressed when my trusty 1915 Vauxhall Prince Henry finally let go after several frustrating days with an overheating radiator.

There was no other option but to start hitch-hiking to stay on the challenge, and what better seat to pick than that used by the Queen, in an ex-Australian governor general's Phantom V, entered by a plucky team of Australians, who had room to spare on the luxurious leather rear seat. Last week we camped under the stars beside Qinghai Hu, China's largest lake. More than 200 enthusiasts from 24 different nations, tried different ways of camping beside their classic cars. Those that got it wrong awoke to a layer

of frost on their sleeping bags. But their misery was relieved by the wholesome food provided by the Nepalese caterers.

Our big black Rolls-Royce, owned by Sydney surgeon John Matheson, purloined on towards Tibet. At Golmud, the start of the climb to the roof of the world, we shacked down in a rough hotel.

But then came an even more distressing breakdown. Having gone up every hill in top gear, the Phantom V broke a rear leaf spring, which is irreplaceable here in Lhasa. So instead, the car arrived on a truck. It was a great blow.

We have lost some lovely cars. The 10-litre aero-engine 1907 La France was going great guns, outperforming many a more modern car, but Herman Layher at the wheel suffered from having the wrong clothes, went down with hypothermia, and was found naked in a nomad's Yurt tent drying out his Barbour motorcycle outfit, being entertained on Yak stew and by shepherds smoking a strange weed. Rally doctors all voted reluctantly that Herman be told he could not carry on.

Setting out of Golmud there were still 90 healthy sounding cars. It is cold, but wonderfully striking countryside. Motor memories that last a lifetime are made of moments like this, the first rally to climb the world's highest road.

It is the only road between China and Tibet that is kept open all year despite ice and rain. This is the peak time of year for repairs: there must have been a least 500 men working on each 100km stretch, but bridges are down and parts of the road are washed away, so constant diversions are needed through mud, rocks and ruins. Nevertheless it was a sensational drive ranging from

snow-capped mountains to high pasture for yaks and sheep. To give China her due, the roads are reasonably straight, with very long climbs or gentle gradients.

Warnings of gloom from Rally Director Philip Young that at this altitude heavily overloaded cars will not cope were taken to heart by some who romped up the slopes - others who did not consider such advice are all now looking for welding shops.

Now we have to climb up to 16,000ft, and your next report will no doubt be full of the horrors and splendours of camping at the foot of Mount Everest, our last night's camping in Tibet before we leave this remarkable country. If Philip Young and his Classic Rally Association team look anything but relaxed, it could be because we are truly entering the unknown, rumours abound that half a mountain has slid down in the recent monsoons and blocked the one track to Friendship Bridge and the border post to Nepal. Alas, the rains are late this year, and the 13 rivers we have to drive through, each wider than the Thames at Westminster Bridge, remain a daunting prospect.

on the very day that the Chinese Government announced in Peking that they had found the original site of Shangri-La. To the rallyists, Lhasa was like Shangri-La, and even at 14,000ft it was sheer bliss after the heady road from Golmud to enjoy a day's rest, a chance to wander around the Potala Palace, and explore the incredible monastery with red-robed monks spinning their prayer wheels in the centre of town.

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We were promised an adventure, and the fact that the team that has worked for four years on this epic does not itself know what is up the road ahead of us underlines just how adventurous this remarkable event has become. Talk of sticks of dynamite and headlights being wired onto the front of bulldozers for night shifts fills the chatter in the bar of the excellent Lhasa hotel.

Results? A Citroën 2CV, a Ford Anglia once rallied by Lord Steel, a Hillman Hunter and other humble classics are up with the leaders, who also include some 40-year-old American classics. Seven cars were still penalty-free when we reached Nigales and Team Rover looks good for the team prize. Hopefully I can obtain a car with sufficient back seat to keep up with them. Remarkably, only a dozen cars are walking wounded... the hotels in Kathmandu certainly could be overflowing - that's if we get that far.

This was the trek that has made the rally the challenge that it was planned to be. And on the whole, most drivers and their cars have risen to the challenge.

More next week

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

IN THE 1920S A VEHICLE WAS EXEMPTED FROM CAR TAX IF IT WAS USED ONLY FOR DRIVING THE SERVANTS TO CHURCH

THE 1947 VOLVO PV444 HAD A DASH-MOUNTED FLOWER VASE

EUROPE'S LEADING RESTAURANT GUIDE STARTED LIFE AS A PROMOTIONAL GIVEAWAY FOR THE MICHELIN TYRE COMPANY

WHEN THE PASTON BYPASS, BERKSHIRE'S FIRST MOTORWAY, OPENED IN 1958 THE PENALTY FOR REVERSING UP THE ON-RAMP WAS A £20 FINE

It's a dog, but someone wants it



CHANGING TIMES

It's a dog, but someone wants it

Russell Hayes finds there is a market for motoring's lemons

CARS WITH BAD REPUTATIONS

■ Lada's Riva does have its good points — it is as tough as old boots, cheap to run, and has enough space to accommodate a large Russian grandmother. It is, however, like old boots to drive, and the safety equipment runs only to seatbelts. The last P-reg Riva 1500 is still quoted at around £3,000 in price guides, but you would get little more than your bus fare home if you tried to trade in a ten-year-old model.

■ Daimler's DS420 limousine is miles cheaper than a Rolls-Royce, but posher than a stretched

Ford. The engine goes on for ever, and there's miles of space inside. It looks rather funereal, however, especially if painted black, and is prone to rusting. Depending on extras, age and mileage, they will fetch from £1,500 to £40,000.

■ The Citroën CX has lots of space, a swishy ride and super-light steering. It looks elegant, and the turbo-diesels are fast. But they all throw a fit if not well maintained. Build quality is non-existent, the last 1990 diesel estates are listed at £4,000, the rest, from £300 upwards.



Roger Bradford is the only Citroën main dealer to touch the CX. Despite its habit of falling apart, he says, "It has the beginnings of a cult car, the last big Citroën to have style."

Do not despair. Even if you think your car is the biggest white elephant on the road, somebody somewhere has a soft spot for it. There are plenty of dealers who make a living out of spotting unloved cars and matching them with their ideal partners.

Ladas? Jamaicans love them. There are loyal owners here, of course, but sales have become a trickle when the UK importers gave up in July after trouble meeting new emissions laws. There are hundreds of the right-angled Rivas still chuntering around and if they are sold to Alan Rochford of Rochford's Exporters in Brixton, South London they are bound for a sunny retirement, although potentially only as spare parts.

"Not many know about the Jamaican connection," he says. "About five years ago a guy wanted to ship ten back there and we asked if he wanted any more." So now Alan buys a couple of Ladas a day and sends them up to Hull. "It is a real big thing in Jamaica and Cuba. The Russians had no money to buy aluminium ore so they gave them cars instead."

Rochford will ship anything there's a market for. Outside in the yard, Lada Rivas and Samaras sit stacked against Toyota vans. In the recent past, it was Latvia that couldn't get enough. "It was unbelievable. We used to have Latvians camping overnight in the yard." Now, thanks to a huge import tax, Latvian demand is dwindling. Jamaicans, too, are getting a taste for air-conditioned Toyotas. Nobody, it seems, is immune to creature comforts.

People may laugh at Ladas but try to sell them an old Citroën CX and they run away screaming. The 1974 CX was meant to be less complicated than the DS but it still retained hydro-pneumatic suspension, power brakes and the exotic-sounding Varipower steering. They were lovely to look at, but rapidly fell to bits.

"They had a terrible name, but those who like them wouldn't drive anything else," says Roger Bradford of the CX Centre in St Ives, Cambridgeshire. He's the only Citroën main dealer that will touch the CX and he runs the Centre alongside the new car showroom. "We reasoned there was a future in the CX. It has the beginnings of a cult car, the last big Citroën to have style. Driving a CX is an incredibly sensual experience."

Roger's restored CXs sell to a select few at prices from £3,000 to £7,500 for one of the last turbo-diesels. "Lots and

lots goes wrong," Roger admits. "We only buy from trade contacts and new Citroën dealers who know nothing about them and just panic."

Selling around 50 cars a year, the CX Centre needs the back-up of nice uncomplicated Saxos and ZXs but Roger reckons the CX will have its day. "Most of my customers are London based and very style conscious. Our buyers don't want a BMW because it's a box and a Jag is a spiv's car in their eyes."

But we Brits are an ungrateful lot. In 1992, our last bespoke Daimler limousine whispered off to its grave and we didn't notice. Launched at £4,424 in 1968 when a Mini cost £635, the Daimler became the car for embassies, funeral directors and wedding chauffeurs. In business since 1947, Wilcox & Co Limousines of Chalfont St Giles has seen it come and go along with its ancestor, the Daimler Majestic. "Anyone who wanted a stretch limo or a hearse bought one of these," says Paul Wilcox, who runs the business

with brother Peter. "We once found we'd supplied one to Howard Hughes."

The Daimler was the last true purpose-build limo. Its Jaguar engine had a lower compression ratio, which enabled it to produce more torque for those urban take-offs and made for a long life. It also meant it could burn low-grade fuel. "It could almost run on rubbish," says Paul. Until the advent of the stretched Ford Granada in the 1970s, all was well. "There was a funeral director, Fred Payne, in West London who bought 12 Fords. He saved around £2,000 a car, and that was an awful lot then."

Suddenly the Daimler looked expensive and was suffering from the dodgy build quality that plagued its owners British Leyland. Sales languished until towards the end of its life, price cuts of around £1,500 revived interest, but as a hand-built car that had never seen a catalytic converter it was doomed.

So how about a used buy? If a car that was always kept looking shiny seems like a good buy, be warned. Wilcox says that while many Daimlers were shiny outside, the owners never gave them so much as an oil change and they quietly rusted away.

Today, friends of the old girl are more likely to be foreign than local. "It was probably the most elegant of limousines but we've got used to it," Paul observes. "More foreign people view them as classics, nothing looks like a 420."



CX's style appeals to trend-setters, and offers spacious interior. Technology lets the car down badly, however

PARADE OF THE POOREST: CAR 97 READERS NOMINATE THEIR WORST CARS IN THE WORLD

Leyland puts Britain at the top of the all-time scrapheap

It was reputed to be the worst car in history, but last month CAR 97 marked the 40th anniversary of the Ford Edsel by pointing out some of its saving graces. Then we asked our readers to nominate their own candidates for the dubious title of world's worst car.

While many of you have individual pet hates, the unfortunate car most mentioned as the worst ever was the Austin Allegro (see letter, right). Colin Anstey of Lee, South-East London, wrote: "The awful All-aggro, as it was unkindly nicknamed, hardly bears comparison with such horrors as East Germany's Trabant..."

"No, what makes the Allegro the world's worst car is how spectacularly inferior it was to the car it replaced. BMC's well-beloved ten-year best-selling 1100 was crisply styled by Pininfarina, the Allegro drew inspiration from the Leyland canteen cook's dumplings." Mark de Angeli of Edenbridge, Kent, says, "The



Trabant: worst car, but a victim of politics, not design

world's worst car is either the Austin Princess or the Allegro. Which one you hate more is simply a matter of taste." First, though, he says that, "If the criterion is 'should have known better' then the Aston Martin Lagonda is in with a rather loud shout. Watching it try to cope with a corner while its driver is doing the same

with the dashboard makes one weep for the memory of its glorious stablemates." Mr de Angeli also picks out the Trabant, saying, "It is the worst car ever made... but does it really deserve the contempt inherent in this award? The Trabant was the product of a system congenitally incapable of making a

decent motor and so is really more underdog than dog." British Leyland's Princess comes in for a hammering from Norman Milne of Kinghorn, Fife, in Scotland. The Princess, later marketed as the Ambassador "was nothing but trouble, cost a fortune in running costs and depreciation and exuded poor quality

— with the result that very few remain on the roads today", he writes. Mr Milne praises the car's spaciousness but says: "One colleague who bought three new ones for his firm told me that all had cost so much to run and put right that they alone had nearly bankrupted his company. Even when visit-

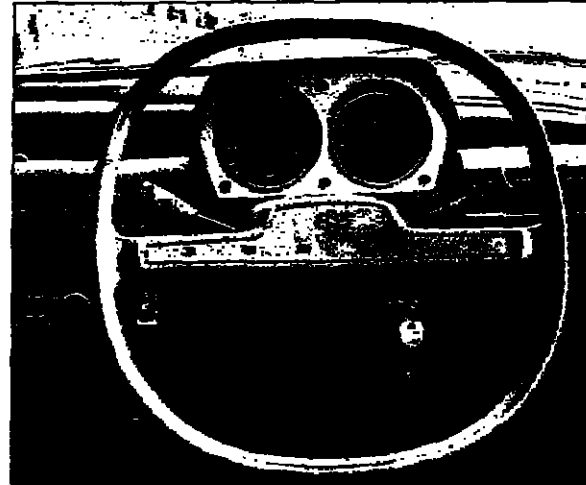
ing scrapyards, I have never seen one with even 100,000 miles on the clock." David Stuckey of Ormskirk, Lancashire, nominates the 1950s Triumph Mayflower as the worst car yet. "While it may have been plain sailing for the Pilgrims, for us a Mayflower voyage meant towels and lots of patience as

ALL-AGGRO

Sir,
The world's worst car must be the Austin Allegro (a name that was in danger of transgressing the Trade Descriptions Act). When I was at school in the 1970s, a popular rumour was that few, if any, Allegros finished a journey with all four wheels attached.

I always attributed these rumours to childish imagination — until I met a friend who had succumbed to poverty and invested in an umpteenth-hand model. Driving down a hill one day a wheel loosened, bounded ahead of him and eventually crashed through the window of a butcher's shop.

I would also like to mention the Lada. A woman wrote to a motoring magazine hoping



Checking the Allegro's tyres meant counting the wheels

to put the record straight. Driving along the motorway her Lada went out of control and performed enough aerobatics to make Nadia Comaneci look rather second-rate. When the car came to

a stop she was "completely unscathed". Strangely, this behaviour did not appear to be a cause for concern.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CARR,
Peterlee, Co Durham.



Princess, Ambassador: different names, same old creak

water seeped through the quarter light, around the windscreen and in the boot: the heater was very hot and miss (the controls and dials were ivory white, like piano keys, which did not add to its street-cred) and the engine was woefully under-powered to propel the car at any respectable speed up even the simplest hill."

A posthumous award is recommended by Nic Orchard of Deal, Kent, for the Simca 1100. "Younger readers may look blank as few examples have survived long enough to earn the cult or classic status conferred on some of the industry's best — and worst — curiosities."

"My 1975 Simca deserves your title: a Gallic import... devoid of the style that has redeemed many French cars, the Simca was hard to love even though it was mine. Tiny in every sense. Hours were spent cursing the thing." Looking back in anger is George Mehan of Highbridge, Somerset, who writes:

"To those of us who were seeking a cheap used car in the Thirties, the Trojan was the one to avoid unless one required solid tyres and wheels, two speed, chain drive, a hand-start two-stroke engine and the ugliest open four-seat body ever."

Harry Purchase's girlfriend persuaded him to sell a Royal Enfield motorcycle in the early 1950s and buy the car that gets his nomination for the world's worst — the Bond Mini.

Mr Purchase of Penton Hook, Surrey, remembers "a seriously deficient braking system, a canvas hood which leaked at every joint, a ground clearance that ensured water poured in through the foot pedal holes in the floor."

The car ended up dumping him and his girlfriend in a gutter after a rear wheel collapsed and axle sheared.

Suitably naff prizes will soon be sent to the authors of all letters quoted

CARMART: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW, AND WHAT'S USED, ON THE FORECOURTS

Skoda's cheap, but no joke

The Felicia is not flash, but it works in the real motoring world, says Alan Copps

There was a time not long ago when the term "budget car" was pejorative. It meant a cheaply produced, crudely finished car that relied on out-of-date technology to provide motoring at a subsistence level. Safety and reliability were barely mentioned in this context and performance was strictly secondary to the fact that there was a wheel at each corner. As for warranties, this was uncharted territory.

But I've just been driving the vehicle that was voted "Best Budget Car" for the past two years running in the sought-after awards from *What Car?* magazine. Nothing could prove so convincingly how the motoring landscape has changed in the past decade.

Forget for a moment supercars, prestige marques and the catch-all word "image" that the marketing men bandy around so freely in an attempt to convince car buyers that "you are what you drive". Brace yourself to endure a few second-rate jokes from friends

'It is as solid as something built to German standards'

If what you want is a decent-sized family car costing under £10,000 with the capacity to seat four adults in comfort or carry heavy loads on occasion and with an engine that does sound as if it's busting a gut every time the gradient exceeds one in a hundred, it is well worth considering.

While you're thinking about it, remember that this vehicle comes with a three-year unlimited mileage warranty, including full AA roadside cover, so if your excursion into budget territory proves a mistake at least you won't have to pick up the bill.

In fact the Felicia range begins right down at £5,999 for a 1.3L hatchback. But because I was in the throes of moving house at the time, I



It might be a budget car, but Skoda has got the basics right, with good load capacity, power and economy. Styling is by no means bad-looking

FELICIA GLI

Engine: Four-cylinder, 1.9-litre diesel producing 64bhp at 4,300rpm.
Transmission: Five-speed manual.
Performance: Top speed 97mph; 0-62mph in 17.5 secs.
Economy: Urban 37.4mpg; extra-urban 42.1mpg; combined 42.1mpg.
Equipment: power-assisted steering, tilt/slide sunroof, roof rails, central locking, engine immobiliser, height-adjustable seat belts, split/fold removable rear seats, remote tailgate release.
Price: £9,399.

calculated to be the most economical, I quite suddenly became aware that I had covered more than 400 miles before I needed to stop and refill the 9.2-gallon tank. This is not the perfect car by any means. The engine is surprisingly refined for a diesel and can be nippy if driven with a bit of enthusiasm, but it's not quite a match for the unit of the same size produced

by the Citroën/Peugeot group. The car's interior, with cloth upholstery and ribbed carpets, is plain and functional rather than stylish, but it does include a radio that is mercifully simple to use, an improvement on some I've encountered in cars of twice the price.

The ride is comfortable and the suspension coped well with the rural rides that I subjected it to. The estate gives bags of room for a car of its class and loading is easy.

In GLI form, the estate comes with power steering, central locking, a sunroof, split/fold rear seats and roof rails all as standard. A driver's airbag is included in the standard equipment list on everything except the most basic model and an immobiliser is standard throughout the range.

The Skoda is a very simple car in many ways but it feels as solid as you would expect of something built to Volkswagen standards and, although it is hardly a key factor in this price range, the vehicle's styling is not at all bad-looking.

Skoda is steadily consolidating its reputation for offering value for money, and that is reflected in sales up by more than 50 per cent this year.

Forget the "budget" tag. This is a "real world" car with an awful lot going for it.

Good news from the humble hatchbacks

THE HUMBLE Ford Fiesta and Vauxhall Astra might stir little passion, but have long been among Britain's best selling cars, and represent great value second-hand, writes Vaughan Freeman.

The newest incarnation of the Fiesta, thanks to a freshening of its styling, but especially because of its highly popular 1.25-litre engine, does its job very well, and its revamped handling has kept it abreast of the competition, reports CAP Black Book.

The LX Fiesta's equipment makes it particularly sought after, especially if fitted with power-assisted steering. Even small cars benefit from this, especially for town driving. When squeezed into tight parking spaces, those accustomed to driving without power steering will be amazed at how much difference it can make.

The Ghia and Ghia X Fiesta give extraordinary levels of comfort and equipment for such a small car. Expect to pay £6,250 for a 1996 N-registered Ford Fiesta 1.25 LX three-door hatchback with 30,000 miles

FORECOURT

on the clock. This month the highly respected *What Car?* motoring consumer magazine rated the 1.25-litre Fiesta as the "finest driving supermini you can buy" and named it best used supermini. The magazine also lavished praise on the 1.4-litre LS Vauxhall Astra, naming it best small family used car.

The small Astra, reports CAP, is a firm favourite, and the range benefits

from having something for everybody, with four door saloon, hatchback and estate versions.

The LS-badged car remains the most popular, especially models with the V-shaped grille and, as with the Fiesta, power steering. Although the present Astra is due for replacement, the used model still offers sound value-for-money motoring.

Expect to pay around £4,150 for a 1994 M-reg Astra 1.4-litre Merit three-door hatchback with power steering and 60,000 miles on the clock.

USED CAR BRIEF



JAGUAR XJS (1986-1994) Not so easily attracted as current Jaguars, the old-style XJS nevertheless offers luxury and style at bargain prices. Launched in 1986, the six-cylinder petrol engines range from 2.9 to 4-litre units, and there are 5.3 and 6-litre V12s also. Matched to two-speed manual or four-speed auto, the car was revised in 1995 and has just been replaced by the new V8 saloons.

GOOD NEWS: All Jaguars come with creature comforts such as power steering, central locking and electric windows. The car is a joy to drive, anti-lock brakes are standard and a well-maintained one should last long enough to become a heirloom.

BAD NEWS: Poor handling can hint at deep-rooted problems with rear suspension. Check that the huge array of electronic toys such as the dashboard computer all work, and that electric seat controls operate properly. Damp carpets in the boot could indicate a leak.

LOOK FOR: The most recent cars which were fitted with leather trim, remote central locking and driver airbag as standard. Jaguars bought privately can be incredibly cheap but pay more for dealer cars with a full service history. Like top-range Mercedes and BMWs, the Jaguar needs leather seats, air conditioning and automatic transmission to maximise its potential.

AVOID: The 2.9-litre engine is really too feeble to move such a heavy car smoothly and with ease. The 3.2-litre which replaced it from 1996 is much better. Ask if the car has been garaged otherwise paintwork may have suffered in the elements.

INSURANCE: Cover from AA Insurance (Tel 0800 444777) on a 1994 Jaguar XJS 3.2-litre (1995) 2.9-litre car, male or female with full no claims living in Winchester £268 a year fully comprehensive. A 22-year-old male with one year no claims living in south London pays £1,693 and a similar female £1,398.

REPLACEMENT PARTS: (Prices supplied by Cussons 01922 823622) Full exhaust system £815; catalytic converter £502; rear damper £92; front brake pads (each set) £58; radiator £289; starter motor (exchange) £345; alternator £282.

PRICE RANGE: Expect to pay around £2,000 for a 1991 Reg 3.2-litre auto, £5,700 for a 1989 F-reg 3.6-litre auto, £19,000 for a 1993 K-reg 4-litre auto, and £20,000 for a 1993 L-reg 6-litre V12.

OVERALL: Cheap considering what you get for your money. But worth spending more initially to avoid expensive repairs later. Space for rear seat passengers is limited compared to other limousines and the boot seems small. Nevertheless, a car that offers extraordinary levels of comfort and driving pleasure.

Car sales worth a virtual look

BUYING a new car? Forget about that traditional test run around the block to get a feel of the steering and suspension, writes Stuart Birch. You will be able to do it all in the showroom, thanks to sophisticated virtual reality systems.

And if the car does not steer or ride quite how you would like, changes can be made while you are in the virtual world, you can "drive" it again and again until you are happy. Special gloves will enable you to check feel - or "tactility" as the automotive designers would have it - of the seats and switches.

It sounds great, but is this just another piece of whimsical technology that is decades away? "Not at all," says Alec Williams, UK Customer Manager for Delphi Automotive Systems. Lengthening options lists mean that demonstrator vehicles will be less and less representative of what customers are really buying. Virtual reality can bridge the gap between the car they see in a showroom and what they really want.

Ford has also said it is thinking along similar lines, with customers eventually being able to take a virtual-reality test drive in its products. It has demonstrated the basis of such a system at motor shows. But Delphi announced that it is developing technology that will allow another significant step to be taken: "Wearing a 3-D headset and tactile gloves will put you 'in' the car of your choice. When you 'drive' it, seats mounted on hydrau-

lic actuators will bring the sensation of movement from the road realistically to your bottom. If you want sporty suspension, you will even be able to decide how firm it should be. And if, after the car is delivered, you decide you have got it wrong, it will be back into the virtual reality simulator to specify any changes.

The same will go for electric powered steering; electronic controls will make it possible to determine just how much effort you put into it.

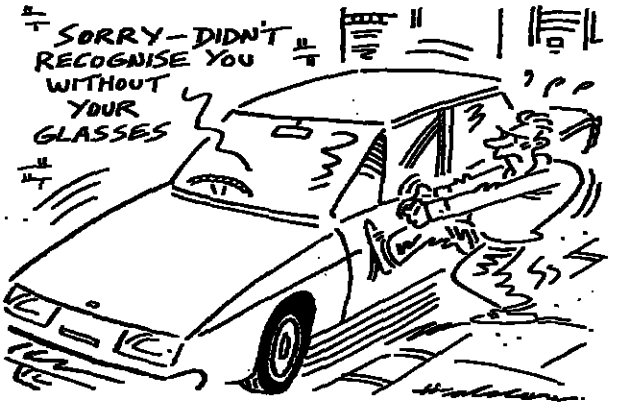
DELPHI BELIEVES such a system could be in showrooms within ten years - possibly less. Designers and engineers are already creating cars - such as the new Ford Puma - without leaving their computer terminals, and Delphi says that the customer will share that technology in the showroom.

Trim could also be personalised. Delphi has what it calls a "3-D Knitting Process", which allows seat and door trims to be created to a customer's personal choice. Once the final mechanical and aesthetic choice is made, the information could be put on computer and downloaded to the factory together with the vehicle order.

"Showroom virtual reality will happen and will become increasingly sophisticated," says Williams. "It is just a matter of time before what is being done in the motor manufacturers' laboratories today is transferred to the showroom. That is the reality."

New locks tell friend from foe

Stuart Birch on the keyless car that knows how you like to drive



Your car is about to greet you like a friend. It won't be quite as pleased to see you as the dog, but advanced technology systems will recognise you - or members of your family - as you approach, and the door will unlock with no need to push remote control buttons.

One system from Delphi Automotive unveiled at the Frankfurt Motor Show is called the Comfort Identification Device (CID) or keyless entry, which uses a transmitter embedded in a plastic card in your wallet. A few yards from the car, a receiver in a door mirror recognises its signal and the driver's door unlocks.

Another technique, also revealed in Germany this week, has been developed by TRW in America and is able to recognise your fingerprint. Just touch a pad on the car and the system, called Truetouch, will recognise a unique fingerprint match in less than one second.

Truetouch will remember the fingerprints of other people authorised to enter the vehicle. A fingerprint could also be placed on a key fob as a car is approached and its door will unlock.

thief but because the system could be programmed to recognise someone with speeding or serious traffic convictions and restrict the top speed of the car. It might also be useful if the family car is borrowed by teenage sons or daughters.

Both the Delphi and TRW systems will allow what the Americans term "vehicle personalisation". It means that once the car recognises which family member is about to drive it, pre-programmed seat and mirror adjustments are made.

Delphi's system automati-

cally locks the car as a driver walks away and, like TRW's technology, there will be no need for mechanical locks or keys.

Although cars now incorporate an enormous amount of electronic technology, there is far more to come. Delphi has also detailed its Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). This combines on-board electronic systems for navigation with sophisticated telecommunications using satellites.

If a car is involved in a serious accident, a panic button could be pushed to call the

emergency services. An automatic message would be transmitted to a service centre by a satellite tracking system and the car would be located immediately. If the accident was serious enough to deploy an airbag, the signal would be transmitted automatically. The service centre would then not only alert police and ambulance but signal the driver's blood group.

While keyless entry should be an effective theft deterrent, if an attempt was made to take the car, the ITS would dial 999. But amid all this technology, we may see the return of a piece of equipment all but forgotten today: the starter button. The advent of keyless entry would make an ignition key an anachronism.

It is possible that an electronic plug similar to that already pioneered by Mercedes-Benz for some models could be supplied to start the car, or voice recognition could enable a driver simply to tell the engine to start - although for safety reasons that looks doubtful at present.

More likely is that a simple starter button will be back on the dashboard, just like we used to have in the good old days when motoring was still an adventure.

THE GREATEST ROADTEST - EVER

The world's fastest cars on the world's toughest racetrack in this month's *Top Gear* magazine

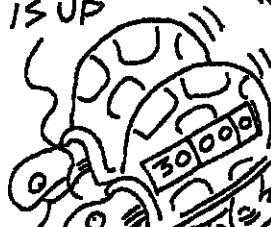
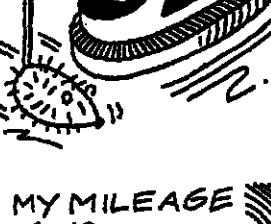
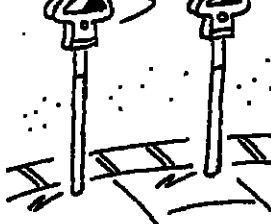
The Nürburgring
12.9 miles
86 corners
Lap record 6m 25.8s



CAR 97

CAR...TOONS

MONEY MONEY
MONEY—THAT'S
ALL YOU EVER
THINK ABOUT



Jess McAree
bridles at East
London's wild
sacrilege of
Mercedes's
finest motors

Vulgarity and Mercedes-Benz: a pairing about as complementary as black and white, or chalk and cheese. If Reliant is Peckham High Street and Ford is Tooting Bec, then Stuttgart's most famous export is definitely Knightsbridge.

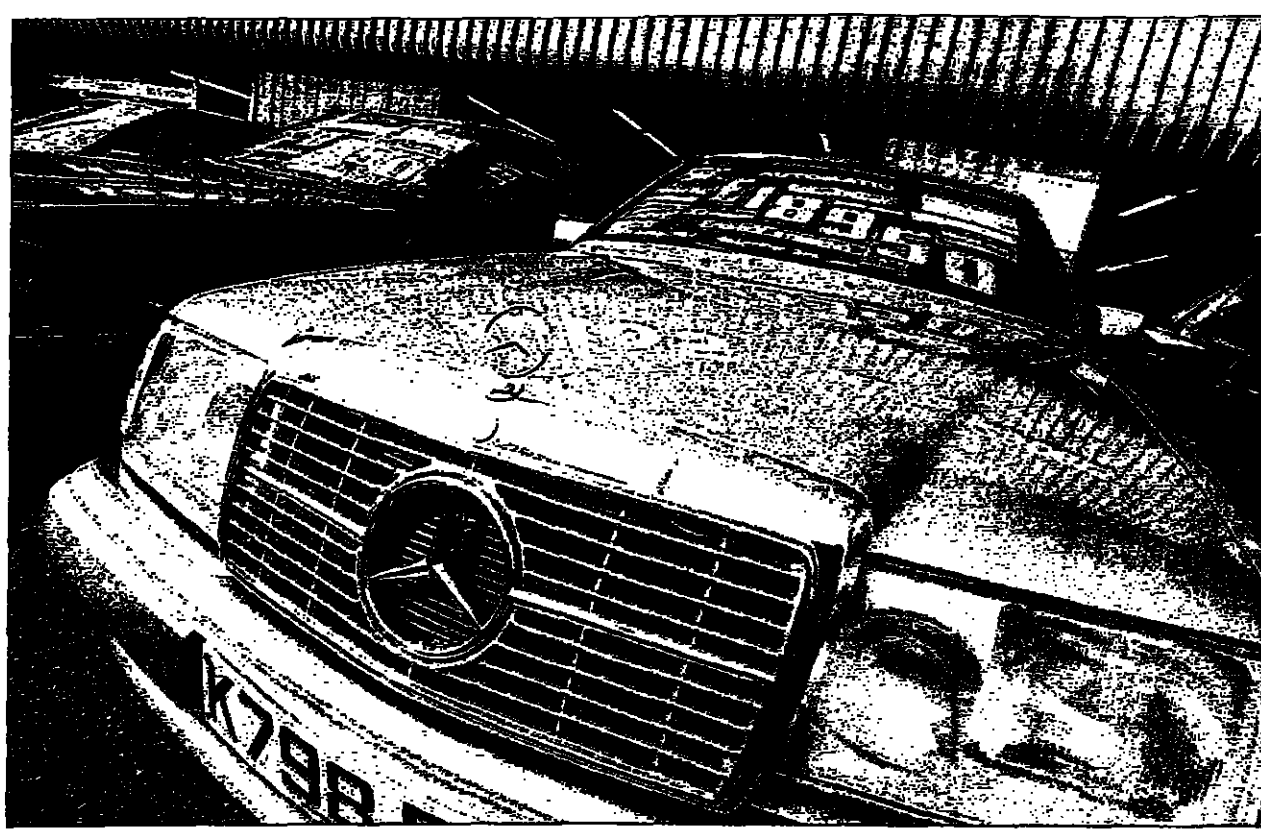
Unless, of course, it's from Bethnal Green. Here on a wide avenue in the heart of London's East End is a car lot where the hallowed products of Mercedes-Benz are subjected to cheerful blasphemy. For Rude Mercs specialises in the unthinkable: business of customising Mercedes cars.

This does not mean the genteel upholstery jobs and coy, tasteful alloy wheels of upmarket add-ons like Mercedes' own AMG. At Rude Mercs they believe in the kind of rip-roaring taste bypass that would make drug dealers wince their hands in despair.

"Oh, we do anything," confirms John, one of the sales assistants. "You want lowered suspension, alloy wheels, big spoilers, blacked-out windows, no problem. We'll do anything you want to a Mercedes. That's why they call us rude."

The truth of this is only too apparent in reception. Under a sign on the wall proclaiming the company's sponsorship of the Tottenham kick boxing champions, the panoply of Rude Mercs wares is on display, from the relatively sober carbon fibre, "soft feel" gearknob to outrageous display wheels and gold-plated grilles with enormous three-pointed stars.

There's even a section dedicated to Mercedes-themed



Considerably large grille badge, lowered suspension, dark windows and alloy wheels make for no-subtlety zone

novelty number plates. John points to a plate with the imaginative legend, RUDIE. "Tried to flag that one to the footballer Ruud Gullit, but he wouldn't go for it."

Most of the custom kits are made to order in the UK with prices around half that charged by AMG. A typical customer will spend about £1,000 having his suspension lowered and alloy wheels fitted. His car is usually an oldish 190E. "They fit up real nice," says John. "The newer ones never look so good."

Ambitious customers go for full interior leather upholstery and walnut-effect paneling, with maybe a custom paint job and exotic spoilers thrown in for good measure. What they won't get, however, is any performance engineering.

"You just can't ever please people with all that business," explains John's colleague Les, "You can make people's cars

look good, but then they wonder why a 2-litre automatic 190E won't go fast. Whatever you do to them, you can never make them go as quick as the customer wants."

"Having said that," he adds brightly, "we never say never. If the customer was having some bodywork done too, well, we might consider a few minor adjustments..."

The company's most exotic project, a yellow and green 190 fitted out with massive rear spoiler, blacked-out windows, pounding bass stereo and 2.3-litre 16-valve engine, has just been sold to Birmingham City footballer Peter Ndlovu for £20,000. Several of the ruder examples, Les assures me, have been bought by rap stars and footballers "who shall remain nameless".

More run-of-the-mill cars

can be found on the forecourt, where you can pay as little as £7,950 for a white T-registered 190E with lowered suspension and an SL-style grille. If you've got cash to burn, try the red M-reg E320 with walnut paneling, the ubiquitous lowered suspension and fancy exhaust. How much? £21,950 — cash only — to you.

So, the big question: is there anything they won't do at Rude Mercs? For instance, could they turn my modest old 190E into a convertible? And how about some nice ultraviolet underlighting?

"Oh yes, we've done the roofs," says Les. "You just cut them off along the mouldings and fit a vinyl soft top. Mind, it's not like a real convertible, but it's the next best thing. Haven't ever done the underlighting, though. It sounds a bit way out. We have enough problems from Hackney council with lowered sus-

pension and speed humps. We lower 'em, then put 'em back up again when the customer decides they're too low. Sort of repeat business. Great, eh?"

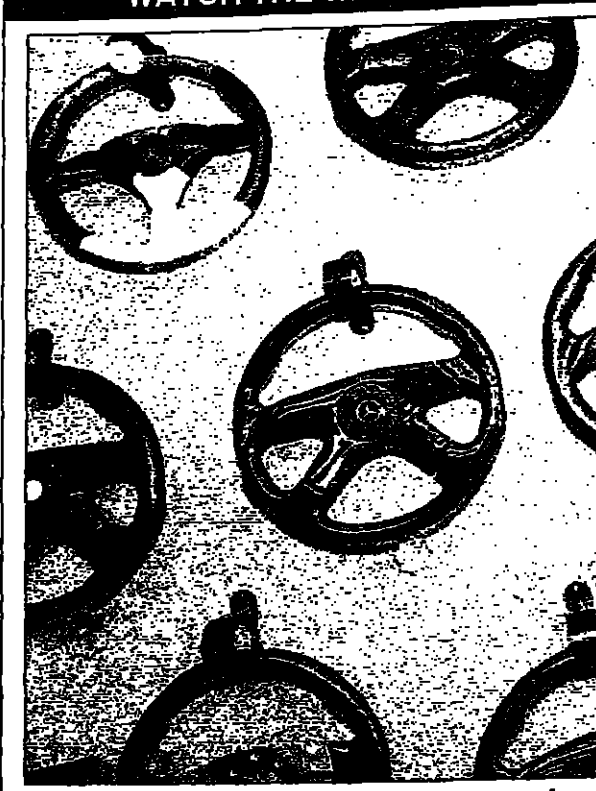
It's certainly the kind of business that Mercedes-Benz would gladly pay good money to see off, but Les is under-terred. In fact, he's puzzled by what the company generally sees as the German car giant's curious snobbery. Just because it's Rude doesn't mean it's not a Merc.

"Mercedes want nothing to do with us, which is stupid because we bring them loads of new business," says Les. "There are loads of people who would never have considered driving a Merc until they saw one of ours."

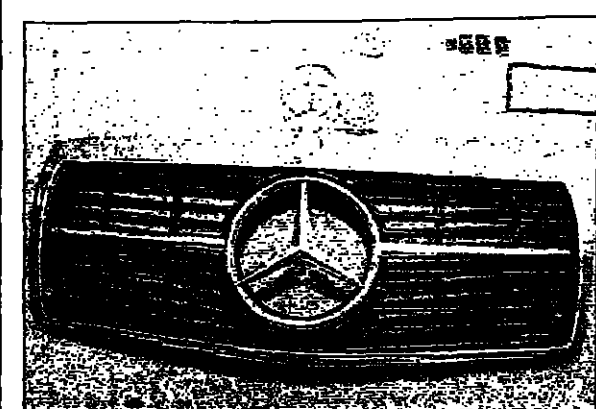
"I mean, who'd have a new Ford when you can have a three-year old Merc. Got a bit of class, hasn't it?"

Rude Mercs: 0171 729 4815

WATCH THE WARRANTY



Not officially approved: Rude Mercs accessories



"If you have your Mercedes customised by AMG or Designo, which offers exotic interior upholstery treatments, the work will be Mercedes approved and covered by the Mercedes-Benz one-year, unlimited mileage warranty," says a Mercedes spokesman.

"But beware of having anybody other than a franchised Mercedes-Benz dealer tinker with your car's suspension, gearbox, drive train, engine or exhaust," the spokesman warns. "These will invalidate your warranty in the event of any subsequent faults."

MERCEDES

Paying over
£300
to insure
your Merc?
It's time
you had the
Privilege.

Call now
You could save
hundreds.

privilege
INSURANCE

0113
292 5555

300TE
1990. Immaculate,
FMSH, 84K, 7 seats,
all extras.
£12,000.
Tel: 01372 734235

300E
1988. blue grey/grey
leather, 55,000 miles,
FMSH, full spec.
Immaculate. £15,499.
01276 26585
or 0370 474586

E220 COUPE
Auto, 1995M, azzurite blue,
grey leather, air con, alloy
wheels, 10 CD, 37,000
miles. Full Service record.
Superb condition.
£26,500.
Tel: 0181 868 2341 (eves).

Supurb Example
300TE AUTO
J reg, exc, FMSH, air, roof
bars, light blue metallic.
Excellent condition.
£14,750.
Tel: 01628 474342.

S500L
'94L, blue black/cream
leather, full spec
including CD, 36,000
miles. MBFSH.
£36,000.
Tel: 01695 421771 (h)
or 0151 521 3003 (c)

SLK
230 compressor, 97P,
immacinate blue, air con, CD,
two tone rims, high spec,
delivered.
£39,950.
Tel: 0181 5026559.

SLK 230
97R, new, under
100 miles, Silver/Red
Black leather, full
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SL420
1987 Mercedes, FSH,
18,000 miles, auto,
ex new, Jersey reg.
RSD
£22,500.
01534 607039

AMG
E36
Mercedes
High spec, 1997, 8,000 miles
very low, air con,
£25,000 o.n.o.
Tel: John 0832 31066
(24hrs 7 days)
or Austin 01753 84077
(Office hours)

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Tel: 0831 237100

C180 Elegance
1994L, 4 speed manual
Green/leather seats, MBFSH,
full spec, 18,000 miles, very
good condition.
£13,950.
0181 467 5548

300CE
1988. blue grey/grey
leather, 55,000 miles,
FMSH, full spec.
Immaculate. £15,499.
01276 26585
or 0370 474586

E220 COUPE
Auto, 1995M, azzurite blue,
grey leather, air con, alloy
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miles. Full Service record.
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E 280
April 94,
Silver, air con, 3 hole alloy
wheels, CD, P.A. RSR,
BSR, CW, C.A. C.I.
absolutely immaculate.
£19,995.
Leeds 0113 257 4988.

300E
1993 E reg.
Black leather with cream
leather, MBFSH, 18,000
miles, alloy wheels, classic
interior, MBFSH.
£19,995.
Tel: 01788 728178

C280 SPORT.
Jan '97, Ruby red metallic,
grey leather, auto 4 speed, air
con, alloy wheels, MBFSH,
full spec, 18,000 miles,
5,500 miles.
Immaculate, £29,500.
01225 736694.

190E
2.0 Ltd Edition
Auto 1993(L), 34,000 miles,
silver metallic, FMSH,
privilege condition, alloy
wheels, ABS, air reg, air
con, £12,750.
01494 676589

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Superb condition.
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